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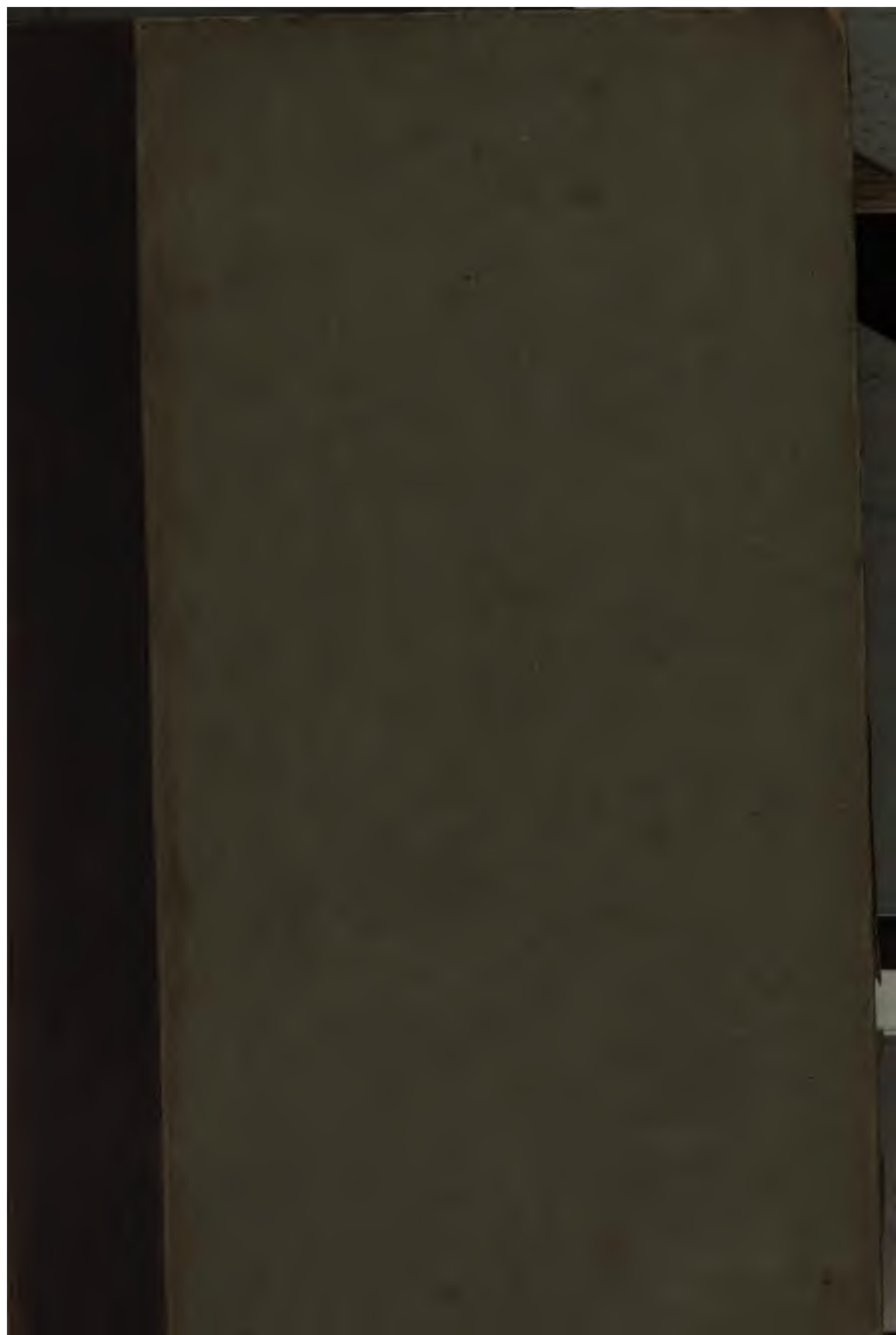
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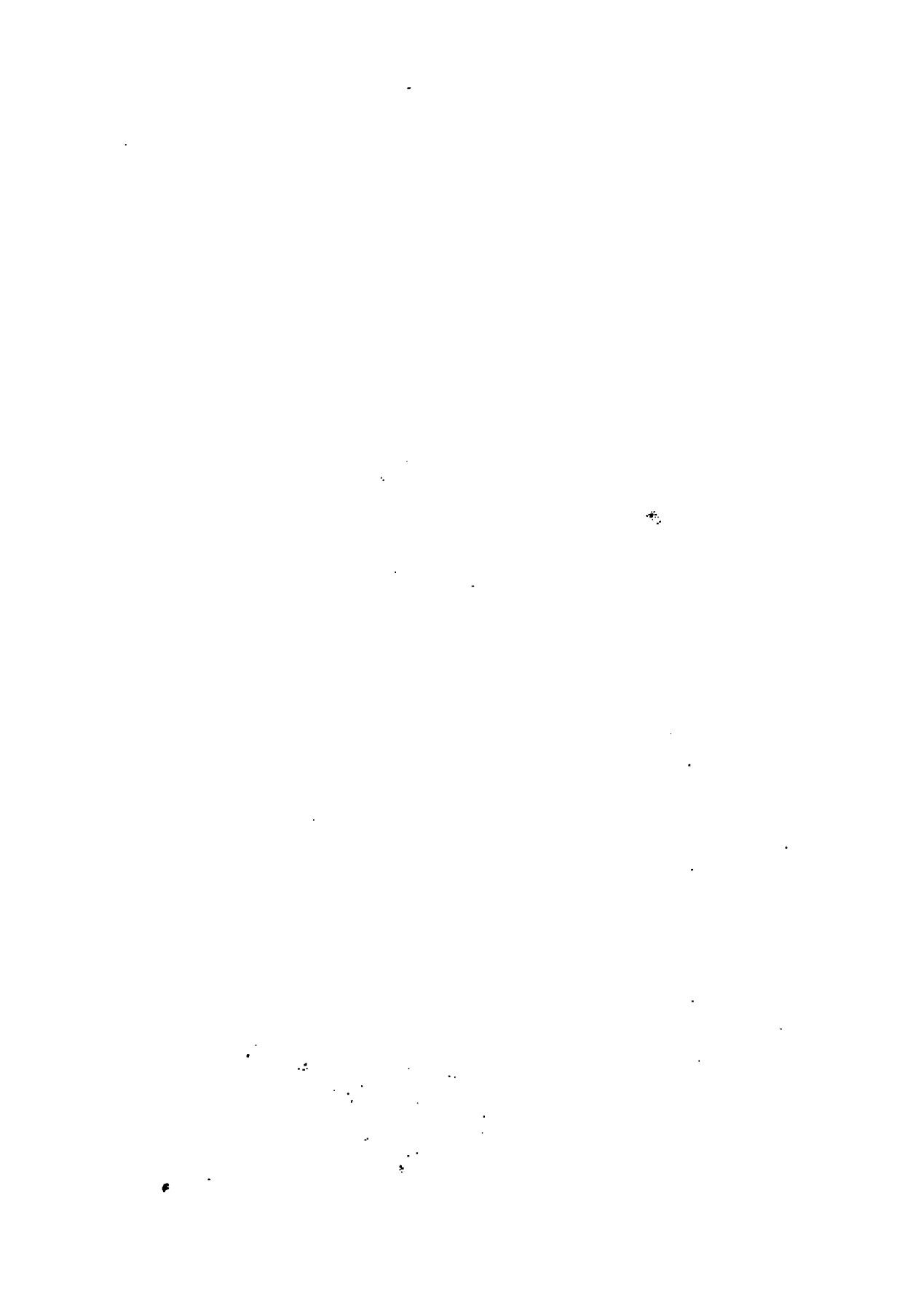
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CAUTIONS
FOR
THE TIMES.

ADDRESSED TO THE
PARISHIONERS OF A PARISH IN ENGLAND,
BY THEIR FORMER RECTOR.

EDITED BY
THE ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN.



Arch. Bishop of Dublin

'WATCH, AND REMEMBER THAT BY THE SPACE OF THREE YEARS I CEASED
NOT TO WARN EVERY ONE NIGHT AND DAY.'—ACTS, XX. 31.

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P R E F A C E.

THE favourable reception of these papers, in the British Islands and in the Colonies,* has induced me to collect and reprint them in a volume.

When I speak, however, of a favourable reception, I mean favourable considering the character and design of the Work, and the principles on which it has been conducted. Hardly any one will doubt that,—when other things are equal,—a publication which is made the organ of some considerable Party, which supports it and whose views it advocates and circulates, will be likely to obtain much greater immediate popularity, than one which stands wholly aloof from all Parties. And a Writer who even only so far identifies himself with a party as to censure errors on one side alone, passing by in silence the opposite errors, will be likely to obtain a greater amount of present favour than one who deals impartially with both.

But, to have sought increased popularity at the expense of diminished usefulness, would, evidently, have been to sacrifice the end to the means.

The reasons why I did think the course pursued the most useful for those it was designed to benefit, have been set forth, perhaps sufficiently, in Nos. XX. and XXI. My case, in many respects, resembled that of the author of the *Spectator*, who found each member of his club willing enough that the prejudices of the rest should be exposed, but each alleging some peculiar reason why himself and his own party should be omitted.

* They are also about to be reprinted in the United States of America.

That the views which have been advocated in these Papers are on the whole sound, I am encouraged to hope, partly by the approbation of several competent judges, and, even still more, by the undesigned testimony, as it may be considered, of opponents. Many persons have, as might have been expected, felt displeasure and alarm at different parts of what has been advanced; and several of them have assailed the publication with vehement declamation; but no disproof has been advanced,—scarcely any even attempted—of any of the statements or the conclusions. And one can hardly doubt that, if this had been possible, it would have been done long since by those who were manifestly so much indisposed to admit those conclusions.

In the case of these Papers, as in my other publications, the more disapprobation I met with, and the more intelligent and the more worthy the objectors, the more earnestly have I urged my views, when *no disproof* was produced. For, the more wide-spread and deep-rooted any error, and the more it prevails in the minds of the wise and good, the more important it is to refute it. If I am right, it will be found out sooner or later; and, so as my work be done, it is of comparatively small consequence how the labourer is treated. The preparers of mummies were, Herodotus says, driven out of the house of the family who had engaged their services, with stones and execrations: but their work remains sound after 3000 years!

Several writers—as was announced in the opening Number—were engaged in the Papers which form the present volume; and the share I have myself had in the several parts of it has been very various. To some Numbers I have contributed the half, or more than half; to others, much less. But as every one of them was most carefully revised by me before publication, I am of course myself altogether responsible for the whole. I have only to add my hearty acknowledgments for the assistance received from several friends, by their writing, their suggestions, and their remarks.

RICHARD DUBLIN.

CONTENTS.

No.

- I. Papal Aggressions, pp. 1—10.
- II. Popular Romish Arguments. The title "Catholic," 13, 14. The old Religion, 14. Unity of the Church, 15. Danger of Private Judgment, 18. "Hear the Church," 19. Tradition, 20. Unchangeableness, 22. Divisions, 23—25.
- III. Popular arguments against Romanism. No one Church Supreme, 29. Worship of Saints and Angels, 31. Prayers and Lessons in an unknown tongue, 33. Transubstantiation, 35. Sacerdotal Priests, 38. Sacrament of Penance, 41—49.
- IV. Review of Romish Tracts circulated in England, 50—60. Arian Tract, 61. Persecution, 62—66.
- V. Part I. Roman Errors have their origin in Human Nature, pp. 67—69. Superstition, 69—83.
Part II. Class Religion, 84—100. Pious Frauds, 100—102.
- VI. Craving for Infallibility, 103—119.
- VII. Romish Tracts. "Old Stones tell Tales," 121—133. "Smithfield Fires," 133—137. "Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament," 137, 138. "Rosary," 138. "Protestantism weighed in its own Balance," 138—143.
- VIII. Argument from Numbers, 146—152. Monastic System, 152—154. Unity, 155. The Safe Course, 156—158.
- IX. Recapitulation. Danger from Within, 159—162. Origin and Progress of the Tract-party, 163—166. Church-principles tried by the Formularies of the Church, 166—176.
- X. Panic fear of Tractism, 179. Means of Concord, 181—184. Mistakes about Saints'-Days, 184—186. Fasting, 187—196.
- XI. Fruits of Tractism. Discouragement of the Study of Evidences, 198—212.

- No.
- XII. Danger of Doubts and Suspicions, 214—216. Use of Evidences, 216—220. Doctrine of Reserve, 221—223.
- XIII. Double Doctrine, 225—226. "Economy" of the Fathers, 227—230. Tract XC., 230—232. Dr. Pusey, 233. Mr. Palmer, 235. Tendency to Infidelity, 237, 238. Appendix, 238—251. Pope's Pastoral, 252—274.
- XIV. Theological Theories, 276—278. Religious Knowledge and Philosophy, 279, 280. Religious Instruction, 281—284. Gradual Instruction, 284—291.
- XV. Infidel tendency of Tractite Teaching, 292. Discouragement of Scripture, 292—298. Views of Inspiration, 298—300. Private Judgment, 300. Ceremonial Religion, 301—305.
- XVI. Apostolical Succession, 306—319.
- XVII. Universal Church, 321—323. Confession, 324, 325. Inconsistency of Tractites, 326—331.
- XVIII. Craving for Infallibility, 333. Faith and Reason, 335. Predisposing Causes, 336—338. Clerical Prejudice, 339. Aristocratic Prejudice, 341. Artifices of Tractites, 343. Monastic Institutions, 344—346.
- XIX. Personalities, 347. Sudden Conversions, 349. Tractism a Reaction, 351. Provision against Reactions, 353—356. Tractism not the only Evil, 357. Danger of Schism, 359.
- XX. Nature of Reactions, 361. Case of the Reformers, 363. Each party objects to Censure, 365. Necessity of Discrimination, 367. Mistakes on both sides, 369. Duty of Members of a Church, 371. Danger of Anarchy, 373—374.
- XXI. Reaction from Church Authority, 376. Careless Language, 379. "The Bible only," 381. Use of Scripture, 383. Popular Errors, 385. Case of Young Persons, 387—389.
- XXII. Authorized Version, 391. Teachers appointed by Christ, 393. Analogy of Secular Knowledge, 395. Authority, 397. Scripture supplies *proofs*, 401. Human Teaching, 403—405.
- XXIII. Ends of Government, 407. A Clerical Order necessary, 409. Qualifications and Authority, 411. Machinery of the Church, 413. Appendix on Translations, 415—419.

No.

- XXIV. Human Teaching provided, 421. Administration of Sacraments, 423. *Some* limits must be settled, 425. Power and Duty of a Church, 427. Extempore Prayers, 429—434.
- XXV. Creeds, 435—438. Omission of Creeds in Scripture, 439—444. Necessary Imperfections, 445. Inconvenience of a Settled Constitution, 447. Convocation, 449.
- XXVI. Non-natural Interpretations, 453. Church-principles a Reaction, 455. Antinomian Teaching, 457—462.
- XXVII. Christian Humility, 463—468. Doctrine of Perfection, 469—472. Fall of Man, 473. Pride of Intellect, 475. Extremes meet, 477—479.
- XXVIII. Party Feeling, 480—496.
- XXIX. German Metaphysics, 497—500. Blending Philosophy and Religion, 501. Objections, 503. Objections to Infidelity, 505. Disbelieving is Believing, 507. Difficulties of Infidelity, 509. Mythical Theory, 510—514. Conclusion, 515, 516.

CAUTIONS FOR THE TIMES.

No. I.

ERRATA.

- Page 99, note, line 14 from the bottom, *for* "there is not required,"
read "there is required."
- 507, insert as a note on the words "civilized state," line 2 from top,
"See Whately's Lectures on Political Economy, and Lessons on
Christian Worship, L. 1."
- 516, line 17 from top, *for* "Antinomian System. These persons,"
&c., *read* "Antinomian System,—these persons."
- 519, col. 1, line 39, *for* "Romish, claims more" &c., *read* "Romish,
claims *no* more" &c. Ibid. col. 2, under the head "Danger,"
for "mocking Saints," *read* "invoking Saints."
- 522, under "Unity," *for* "not too dearly purchased," *read* "too
dearly purchased."

... , ... , so my before you some of my
thoughts on these points, and, with the assistance of some
friends who think with me, to address to you some TIMELY
CAUTIONS respecting them.

And these we propose to print and publish from time to time,
in the hope that they may prove useful to others as well as to
you.

The resentment and apprehension that are now prevailing
have been occasioned, as you are aware, by the Pope's having
thought fit to appoint bishops to preside over the several dis-
tricts into which he has divided England. In doing this, he has
spoken in a style which is very offensive to the greater part of
the English Nation, from its being so arrogant and assuming.

CAUTIONS FOR THE TIMES.

No. I.

'Tis the thunder that frights,
But the lightning that smites.

MY DEAR FRIENDS :

Though we have long been separated, I have never ceased, as you know, to take a lively interest in your welfare, and have addressed you accordingly before now, since I ceased to be your pastor, when I saw special occasion for doing so.

And such an occasion I think there is, now, on account of the great and general excitement that has arisen throughout England. The steps lately taken by the rulers of the Romish Church, have caused great alarm, or resentment, or both, in the minds of many persons. And I think it not unlikely that some may be perplexed and confused by not clearly understanding the questions which are now being debated, and that they may consequently feel alarm in the wrong quarter, and may take wrong measures for guarding against supposed danger.

I have resolved, therefore, to lay before you some of my thoughts on these points, and, with the assistance of some friends who think with me, to address to you some **TIMELY CAUTIONS** respecting them.

And these we propose to print and publish from time to time, in the hope that they may prove useful to others as well as to you.

The resentment and apprehension that are now prevailing have been occasioned, as you are aware, by the Pope's having thought fit to appoint bishops to preside over the several districts into which he has divided England. In doing this, he has spoken in a style which is very offensive to the greater part of the English Nation, from its being so arrogant and assuming.

He speaks of us all as being spiritually his subjects, whether we chuse to submit to him, or not ; and he speaks of himself as Christ's vicegerent on earth, the supreme Head of the Catholic (*i. e.* Universal) Church, and as entitled to the obedience of all professing Christians throughout the world.

But these claims are nothing new. They have been for many centuries essential parts of the Roman-catholic faith. Long before the Reformation which took place in our Country above three hundred years ago, and ever since, the Romish Church has pretended to be "*The Universal, or Catholic Church,*" of which all Christians are in reality members, and to which they are all bound to submit. And accordingly those who are really members of that Church, always prefer to call themselves Catholics.

These pretensions, however, have lately been put forward in this Country in a more ostentatious manner than we have been accustomed to : and this has given great offence to some, and absolutely terrified others, as if they thought that our Protestant Religion was just about to be overthrown.

The tumultuous agitation of their feelings did not allow them to reflect how many proofs History affords that the mere assumption of a title, except so far as it is supported by public opinion, is hardly worth regarding. For instance, the last Pretender of the House of Stuart, Cardinal d'York as he was commonly called, always (after his brother's death) styled himself 'King of England.' His brother was the Pretender Charles Edward, who caused such alarm by the rebellion he raised in 1745, that a reward of 30,000*l.* was offered for his capture. But after all danger of a Jacobite rebellion had died away, the British Government was so far from being alarmed or angry at the assumption of Cardinal d'York, that they actually allowed him a pension.

Again, the kings of England for a great number of years, and indeed till very lately, used to style themselves kings of France, and to quarter the French *fleurs-de-lys* with the English Arms. But the French Governments, knowing that no attempt would be made by the English to conquer France, and that the French People had no wish to place themselves under an English king, never troubled themselves about this memorial of an antiquated claim. If, however, on the other hand, any European

Potentate were suspected of designing to conquer France, and there were many of the French disposed to favour such an attempt, the French Government would feel jealous and alarmed, not at all the less though he might not assume the title of King of France.

In the present case, however, it was the assumption of *titles* that created so much indignation and alarm. Hence, some persons, in their loyal anxiety about the royal prerogative, are desirous of having laws passed to prevent these Romish bishops from assuming their new titles.* And several have gone much further; and have proposed, in speeches at some of the public meetings that have been held, that our Roman-catholic fellow-subjects should be deprived of the civil rights which were conceded to them twenty years ago; and should even be subjected to penal laws.

And many persons again,—indeed the greater part of those who have attended those meetings,—have come forward merely to protest against the Pope's claims, to censure, in violent language, the doctrines and practices of his Church, but without proposing any definite measures to be adopted, or suggesting any course to be pursued. They merely lament and declaim.

Now these last ought to remember that their opponents will be not unlikely to compare them to the mob at Ephesus, who bawled out “for the space of two hours, Great is Diana of the Ephesians!” without having, as the Town-clerk reminded them, any definite cause to be tried, or measure to be proposed; the majority “not knowing for what cause they were come together.”

Now this would have been an error, even supposing Diana had been a true Deity.

Widely different, indeed, we are fully convinced, is our

* It is to be remembered that this passage was written in January, 1851. Most of our readers will probably recollect with what vehement censure we were assailed at the time, for speaking slightly of the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, which occupied the chief part of the session of Parliament, and gave rise to long and angry debates, and furnished a plea for agitators to cry out as if they were aggrieved, though they well knew that the grievance was purely imaginary.

Now, there is hardly any one who does not perceive that we were completely in the right, in thinking that such a Bill could effect no object that could not have been much more easily and better effected by a royal proclamation;—that the law would never be enforced; and that the open and habitual defiance of it would rather tend to encourage and to strengthen those it was designed to check.

We think it allowable to remind our readers of this, because some of them may thus be led to consider whether it is not possible that in some other points also, where we incurred at the time much censure, further reflection and experience may prove that we were not mistaken.

religion from that of the idolatrous Ephesians. But this is only an additional reason why we should use widely different means for supporting it. We justly despise the folly of their worship; and we should be the more careful not to imitate their folly in making "that day's uproar."

We do not say that a wise, and good, and courageous man will never feel indignation and apprehension. But when he does feel them, he will not give vent to them in *words*, but in action; and not in violent and ill-considered action, but in deliberate and prudent conduct, directed to some practical end.

When the commander of a fortress thinks it likely to be attacked by an enemy, he does not show his apprehensions by crying out with terror, or *lamenting*, and wringing his hands; but he strengthens its defences if there seems need, and keeps his garrison more vigilantly on the watch. And if an enemy actually does approach the fortress, he does not occupy himself in *scolding* and reviling them; but, if they are not in formidable force, lets them alone; if they are, cannonades them.

When, therefore, any orator addresses you in eloquent harangues against Romanism and against "papal aggressions," merely for the sake of what is called "*expressing his sentiments*," you will do well to cut him short by asking, "Well, what do you wish us to *do*? What *steps* do you advise to be taken? If you have nothing definite to propose, and merely want to tell us that you disapprove of the Church of Rome, and are very angry and very much frightened, we are ready to take all that for granted. We do not wish to listen to a long speech, merely to say, that 'England expects every man to do his duty!'"

Remember, also, that these addresses to your feelings are not only profitless, and tend to no good result; but, if you give way to their influence, may have a very mischievous effect. When men's passions are worked up to a high pitch, they naturally catch eagerly at any proposal which promises to afford an opportunity of gratifying them, without thinking about its justice or expediency. Nay, the *more* scope such a proposal gives for indulging their angry passions (*i. e.* the *less* likely it is to be just or fit), the more eagerly do they catch at it when we are so disposed. Hence, the orators of whom we have been speaking, not only waste time by their harangues, nor do they merely bring discredit on your proceedings as "a great hubbub about

nothing," but they *prepare the way* for other and more practical persons, who would take advantage of the present panic to persuade you to re-enact the old penal laws against Roman-catholics, or some new ones of the same description. Now, as a man in a passion is apt to strike a heavier blow than is right, or is at all necessary to his own defence; so, if you suffer your minds to be overheated by these indignant and alarming appeals, you may be led to take measures against the Roman-catholics, which would be unjust in themselves, and injurious to your own cause.

We are fully persuaded that those, for instance, who advocate any sort of penal law for the purpose of stopping the progress of Roman-catholic opinions, bring discredit and damage to the christian religion in general, and to our own Church in particular.

I. *They know not what spirit they are of.* So our Lord told those zealous disciples who, after the example of an Old Testament prophet, would have called down fire upon the Samaritans. Now such miraculous penalties as this would certainly (as being inflicted by God Himself) have been much fitter means of repressing error than penalties inflicted by a human magistrate. Yet our Saviour blames the very *desire* of even those miraculously inflicted penalties as foreign to the spirit of *his* religion. Those who seek to repress and discourage erroneous doctrines by civil penalties of any kind, seem to us to run counter to the plainest precepts and constant practice of Christ and his apostles; neglecting the means of conviction and persuasion which *they* deliberately chose, and employing those worldly motives which *they* deliberately rejected. Our Lord, you know, when questioned by the Roman governor, (who wanted to discover whether the new religion was a fit matter for his jurisdiction,) declared expressly that "his kingdom was *not* of this world;" and, when pressed to explain in what sense He was a *King*, added, "for this end was I born, and for this I came into the world, *that I should bear witness to the truth.*" These declarations, taken together, amount to saying,—that his kingdom was *not* to be advanced by outward force, and that it *was* to be advanced by rational argument. Indeed, it is most manifest, that the only *faith* which God can value is a sincere conviction grounded upon diligent and impartial examination of evidence; and that

the only *obedience* which can find favour in his sight is a cordial obedience of the heart. And if so, is it not equally manifest that rewards and punishments, distributed by a human magistrate, to encourage one religion and discourage another, must, so far as they have any direct influence at all, have a mischievous influence? They must tend to produce assent without rational examination, or practice without sincere conviction. If they have any good effects at all, it can be only indirectly and by accident.

“The highest truth, if professed by one who believes it not in his heart, is, to him, a lie; and he sins greatly by professing it. Let us try as much as we will, to convince our neighbours; but let us beware of influencing their conduct when we fail in influencing their convictions. He who bribes or frightens his neighbour into doing an act which no good man would do for reward, or from fear, is tempting his neighbour to sin; he is assisting to lower and to harden his conscience; to make him act for the favour or from the fear of man, instead of for the favour and from the fear of God: and, if this be a sin in him, it is a double sin in us to tempt him to it.”*

As a general rule, a resort to restrictions, and to force of every kind, must be, on the whole, more favourable to error than to truth, in all subjects; because it tends to take away the great *advantage* which truth has over error. Truth being in itself stronger than falsehood, may be expected to gain a superiority where there is free discussion. But Laws and Penalties may be on the wrong side as well as on the right. Those, therefore, who resort to these, may, not unfairly, be presumed to have, themselves, some distrust of the goodness of their cause; since they remove the trial from a court (that of Reason) in which truth has an advantage over falsehood, and appeal to brute-force, in which truth has no such advantage. A fair and *free trial* is what, generally speaking, the intelligent advocates of truth, in all subjects, will be likely to call for, and the advocates of error to deprecate.

Thus, by calling in civil penalties to the *aid* of truth, you create additional (and often angry) prejudices against it, in minds which you cannot bribe or frighten over to your side of the question.

* Arnold's *Christian Life*, p. 435.

The employment of such means, therefore, cannot fail of bringing damage and detriment to the cause of the Gospel. But it would also be, for special reasons, highly injurious to our own Church in particular.

II. Having recourse to Legislative assistance, would, it is obvious, tend to confirm what the Romanists are always saying, —That ours is a *parliamentary religion*. For if it is to be kept up by legal enactments, and *only* so, it cannot be based on Truth.

Now, it is indeed quite true that ours is a parliamentary *Ecclesiastical Establishment*. For, when we speak of an Establishment, we have reference to certain civil privileges and endowments. These, no one could possess but by law; and it is, therefore, by Law alone that the Roman-catholic Religion itself possesses, in various Countries, privileges and endowments. You will remember, in the English History, that when Queen Mary wished to *re-establish* the Roman-catholic Religion in England, she took just the same measures for that purpose as King Edward had taken to establish Protestantism;—she got Parliament to repeal his Acts, and pass others, giving various privileges and endowments to the clergy in communion with the Pope. The Roman-catholic Establishment was then quite as much parliamentary as the Protestant Establishment is now.

But though we have undeniably a parliamentary Establishment, we have *not*, I trust, a *parliamentary religion*; *i. e.* one which all would cease to believe and profess if *legal* support was withdrawn from it. We do not concede to our Prince and Parliament (what the Roman-catholics do concede to their Popes and Councils) the right of determining for us what we ought to believe; though it is not unlikely that many of our princes and parliaments were not more unfit to determine such matters than many popes and councils have been. We do not think that human laws can possibly *oblige* any man to religious faith or practice; and therefore we reject, with scorn the imputation of having a parliamentary religion. But those who seem to apprehend danger to the Protestant *Faith* unless laws are passed to check Roman-catholics, appear, by their conduct, to *concede* that point, and justify that scandalous imputation.

Let it be remembered also that, amongst those of our own Communion who have already some tendency towards Rome,

the impression generally prevails that our Church is already too closely connected with, and too much controlled by the State. Nor is that impression confined to them; being shared in also by most of our Protestant Dissenting brethren. To place the Roman-catholic Church, therefore, in the position of being a sort of champion of Ecclesiastical independence, would be to increase its attractions for weak persons amongst ourselves, and even gain for it some chance of sympathy from the Dissenters also. Then, too, to appear before the world as persecuted people, (especially when the suffering is more showy than severe,) has wonderful charms for fanatical dispositions; while the generous spirit is apt to go rather too far in excusing and helping the persecuted party.

III. We do not, however, deny that there are *other* objects, besides the support of the Protestant religion, and the repressing of Romish errors, which may require legislative interference in the present case. Though the *clergy* ought to feel that their civil rank and dignities are the meanest accident of their office, and therefore should not make them the principal topic of complaint against Papal aggressions, or exhibit any peculiar nervousness about them; yet, the maintenance of the Queen's just prerogatives and dignity against any attempt to infringe them, and security against foreign influence in temporal matters, are, doubtless, fit grounds for the interference of *statesmen*. But those who are for enacting or enforcing just and moderate laws for the due support of the regal dignity, are sadly *crippled* by the other and violent advisers. For, anything, however moderate, will excite suspicion, and dread, and animosity, if believed to be only a *first-step*,—an *instalment* of the persecuting system which those others advocate. Suppose, for instance, that certain depredations or outrages prevail extensively in the Country—something like the *swing-system* among yourselves, or *Rebecca and her daughters* in Wales, or the *Luddite* riots that some of you may remember,—and that laws are proposed for checking those disturbances. If there be a number of men who, in declaring against such outrages, cry out for *suspending the Habeas Corpus*, and putting the Country under *military government*, &c., there will be a dread excited that the moderate and needful laws are only the *beginning* of a sacrifice of all our liberties; and hence the idea will become so unpopular that it

will hardly be possible to pass *any*. Moderate men will be apt to draw back from co-operating at all with the violent, lest the movement should end in throwing power into the hands of persecutors. It was for this reason that the constitutional party, in the times of Charles I. in England, and Louis XVI. in France, were unable to save the monarchy, because they dared not act with sufficient vigour to crush the seditious, lest, in doing so, they should re-establish the old tyranny.

IV. But the thing to be most firmly settled in your minds is, that the *great* danger is one which you *can* guard against, and guard against sufficiently, without any new legal enactments—that of having your own belief perverted. The Pope cannot *make* you Roman-catholics. No one would be alarmed at a fire-brand falling where there were no *combustibles*; though even a spark would be sufficient to blow up a magazine of gunpowder. Now, as for influence over men's minds, *that* not only *may* be gained without any infringement of the laws, or any such assumption of titles as offends men in the present case, but is, in some respects, *more likely* to be gained without them. In a well-governed community, a thief is more dangerous than a robber, and fraud more likely to succeed than force. It was, you know, without the aid of any such showy *apparatus* as has been now employed, that very considerable progress was made, through the past years, in gaining over Englishmen to the Roman-catholic religion; and if all that showy apparatus were to disappear to-morrow, the Roman-catholics would still have all the arguments and inducements left them which have exercised so great an influence upon many members of our communion. And if, by the use of such means, they once gain over a large majority of the people of England to their side, it will be impossible to deny them all the titles and privileges they may chuse to claim. If, on the contrary, the great mass of the English people remain steadfast Protestants, the retaining of such titles, and the putting forth of such claims, on the part of the Romish Hierarchy, will soon appear simply ridiculous, and be discontinued for that reason.

You may not be aware—but it is a fact—that there are at present in England a set of men who pretend to be the apostles of Jesus Christ,—the foundation on which his Church is built,—and the lawful spiritual governors of all Christendom. But

because their adherents form a very small Body, few persons take any other notice of these pretensions than to pity the deluded men who put them forward. Equally pitiable would appear the claims of Cardinal Wiseman to govern "all Middlesex," &c., if the people of Middlesex notoriously paid no attention to his commands. He would be like poor Cardinal d'York driving about Rome with the royal arms of England on his carriage.

Here we make an end for the present ; but we hope to send you another "Cantion" soon again, in which we will try to put you on your guard against some of the most plausible and popular arguments brought forward by Roman Catholics, who desire to make men converts to their system.

January. 1830.

No. II.

Los amenaçados comen pan.—SPANISH PROVERB.
Threatened folks live long.

SUPPOSE all the principal undertakers in the world were to have a fancy to send down to your town a vast quantity of very handsomely-adorned coffins, and velvet palls, and plumed hearses, and parade them about your streets, offering them at moderate prices, and assuring you that you would very soon have need of them, perhaps some timorous and unthinking people would be frightened, because these things are connected with death. But the more considerate would reflect that these things are not the *cause*, but the *effect*, of mortality. A man does not die *because* his coffin is made; but a coffin is made or purchased for him because he is dead.

Such an apparatus as we have been supposing would indeed indicate a belief on the part of the undertakers that there was, or would soon be, a great mortality among you. But a sensible man would say to himself—Whether this be so or not, we shall not die the sooner for all this display of hearses and coffins; unless it be some silly people who may be frightened to death. I for my part will take all reasonable care of my own health; and I will inform these people that I am quite well at present, and should not be the less so though they were to send down all the feathers of all the ostriches in Arabia; and that I have no occasion for any of their wares; for that when my time does come, I mean to be buried in a plain coffin, made by the carpenter of the parish, and to have a sober, quiet funeral, like my fathers before me.

Now, this is just what a sensible man thinks of the step lately taken by the rulers of the Church of Rome. It certainly does indicate a belief that there is a great and increasing number of Roman-catholics in England. But if the people of England chuse to keep to their own Bible and Prayer-Book,

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to the Jewish,) as being unlimited in either *time* or *place*. The Mosaic law, being only a preparation for the Gospel, was to come to an *end* on the establishment of the new kingdom of Heaven, which was to *continue* to the end of the world. And again, the old Dispensation was designed for *one* nation; the *new* for all nations—for mankind *universally*. The old was necessarily connected with some *one place*—Jerusalem, “where men ought to worship;” the new is independent of any particular place. Wherever two or three are gathered together in Christ’s name, “there is He in the midst of them;” Christians themselves, and not buildings or places, being the true temple of God.

Hence, by the way, you may remark that the term “Roman-catholic Church” does (in strictness of speech) imply a contradiction. For *Roman* suggests a necessary connexion with one place, and *Catholic* denotes having *no* necessary connexion with any one place more than another. However, as the term is an inoffensive way of describing those who think that the whole Church should be subject to the Bishop of Rome, there can be no harm in using it in that sense, instead of needlessly exasperating them and ourselves by such terms as *Popery* and *Papists*, which they consider (though without just reason) words of reproach.

2. Another popular plea put forward by Roman-catholics is, that theirs is the *old* religion; ours, quite a novelty, founded by Luther and Henry the Eighth. Henry the Eighth seems on these occasions thrown in chiefly to make the charge the more odious, because he was a hateful tyrant. For, any one at all acquainted with English history, knows that he was as much opposed to our principles as they are, and would have burned any one who publicly argued against transubstantiation, as unmercifully as his daughter, Queen Mary, whom they acknowledge to have been a Roman-catholic. But it does not much matter how wicked some of the reformers may have been, since their wickedness, how great soever, is no proof that the religion they opposed was right. Jehu, though a bad man, acted rightly in putting down the worship of Baal; and they must themselves allow that some of their own Popes have been even monsters of iniquity. Nay, their great historian, Cardinal Baronius, makes the infamous lives of those Popes an *argument* for the truth of

their religion; which must (he thinks) have sunk under the scandal of their vices, if it had not been supported by the special providence of God.

But (not to dwell upon these matters) the truth is, that *our* religion is the *old* one, and theirs the *new*; only *their* corruptions do not wear the garb of novelty, because they came in without being perceived, silently and gently, through a long lapse of time; whereas our *reformation* of them, and restoration of the primitive faith, was made suddenly and all at once. When you scour a room, you remove, in an hour or two, dirt which had been gathering for several days; yet that is only called *keeping it clean*, not changing it; and so, when you wash your face, or brush your clothes. If the corruptions of the Church of Rome had been thrown off one by one, each soon after it came in, no one would have thought such a continual *keeping the Church clean* to be innovation. But, because they were left to accumulate too long, and a great general correction had to be made suddenly and at once, therefore the restoration of the old state of things seems, to ignorant people, the bringing in of a new one.

What is called "the change of the *style*" is a striking instance of a seeming *innovation*, which was really a *restoration*; being a return to the right course, by a sudden correction of a great error that had resulted from the accumulation of imperceptibly small ones. The year contains 365 days and (*almost*) a quarter. To keep the reckoning right, an additional day is inserted in February, every fourth (leap) year, to make up the four quarters of a day. But this addition is *a very little too much*: the excess amounting to three days in every 400 years. And this continually increasing error went on uncorrected (in this Country) till it amounted to eleven days. In the middle of the last century we corrected it by adopting what is called "the new style," and at once cutting off those days; just as one puts forward the hands of a clock which has lost. But this, though it was, in truth, only a *restoration* of the true time, appeared to ignorant people a great and offensive *innovation*, because it was a correction made all at once, of an error which had crept in by little.

3. Another point which Roman-catholics often press upon our notice is the UNITY OF THE CHURCH. They hold it to be

necessary, and appointed by God, that the Church, or whole body of Christians at any one time on Earth, should form one society, under one government: and hence they argue (not unfairly) that this Church must have an earthly Head, or Supreme Governor, whom all Christians are bound to obey;—whether that be the Pope alone, or the Pope and a general Council (on which points they are divided amongst themselves): and they urge, that since the Protestant Churches are *not* thus united in one society, and they *are*, therefore it is plain that *they* are the *one* universal Church which all men should belong to. They forget, when they argue thus, that, even on their own principles, there is at least one other Body which has just as good claims to such an unity as this—namely, the Greek Church; which exists (and has subsisted as long as the Roman-catholic) in a great part of Europe, Asia, and Africa. But one needs to trouble oneself the less about the pretensions of either the Greeks or the Roman-catholics, because this whole notion of the Unity of the Church is quite *unscriptural*.

The Scriptures never teach us to regard the Universal Church, or Body of believers existing at any one time on earth, as, in this sense, one Society. They rather teach us to regard believers on Earth as *part* of a great Society (Church or Congregation), of which the Head is in heaven, and of which many of the members only “live unto God,” or exist in his counsels;—some having long since departed, and some being not yet born. Of such a community *the Centre* cannot possibly be on earth: and, accordingly, the apostle Paul expressly distinguishes the Christian Church [Assembly or Congregation] from that of Israel:—“Ye [that is, ye Christians] are not come to the mount that might be touched; [as the Israelites were collected in a great assembly—those of them that *were alive that day*—round Sinai, as a holy place on earth] but ye are come to mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, *the heavenly Jerusalem*, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.” (Heb. xii. 18—24.) So in the Epistle to the Galatians: “Mount Sinai answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem

which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." (Gal iv. 25, 26.)

Nor does the thought of having one earthly centre of unity, or Supreme Governor, ever enter into the descriptions of christian Unity given us in the New Testament. The Sacred Writers tell us, indeed, that all Christians have "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, [that is, that all are baptized alike into the same privileges,] one God and Father of all." (Eph. iv. 5, 6.) But they never add, "one Pope, one Council, one form of Government." As a bond of union between the members of particular Churches (or Congregations), Christ *did* ordain that they should meet together to eat of one bread and drink of one cup; but He *did not* institute any assembly of the representatives of all Churches, or any rite which would require all Churches to confederate together.

All Christians are bound to "live in love," one with another, as children of the same heavenly Father, and disciples of the same Master, even Christ. The Universal Church may, therefore, be said to be *ONE* in reference to its Supreme *HEAD in heaven*, but it is not one community on earth. And even so, the human Race is one in respect of the one Creator and Governor; but this does not make it *one Family* or *one State*.

The Apostles, indeed, exercised a general government over the various Churches which they founded: but it does not appear that they appointed any persons to succeed them in that *general* government. We read of their appointing "elders in every city;" but we do not read of their setting, or intending to set, any one over the whole Church. If you look at the account of Paul's taking leave of the elders of Ephesus and Miletus, (Acts, xx.) *whom he expected never to see again*, you will plainly see that he could not possibly have had any notion of any supreme *central authority*, lodged either in the Church of Jerusalem, or of Rome, or in Peter and his successors, or in any *general Council*. For he there directly foretels that false teachers should arise out of their own Body (that is, from amongst the clergy), and anxiously impresses on them the best advice he could think of for guarding against such a danger. Yet that advice is only *to watch, and remember what he had taught them*. This seems to imply that each particular Church was left

sufficient *means* within itself to ascertain the true doctrine of Christ, continuing, and preserving it; but that the actual preservation of such doctrine depended on the *watchfulness* of the Churches themselves. For, the occasion was one on which he could not have failed to bid them have recourse, in case of any difficulties or disputes among themselves, (such as he actually foresaw,) to some central authority, if any such had existed, or were to be set up.

Nor does the apostle Peter (though writing his second Epistle, in the near prospect of death (2 Pet. i. 14, 15), and anxious to provide a record of his teaching that might last after his decease) say a word to the disciples of the duty of submitting to his successors; but refers them back for guidance to the words of the holy prophets, and the commandment of the Apostles (chap. iii. 2), and to his own letters (*ibid.* i.), and to those of Paul (15, 16).

In the beginning of the Revelation of John, too, you will find the Lord addressing *each of the seven Churches of Asia* as severally independent of any earthly central power, and responsible to Him alone for their conduct as Christian-Churches.

On the whole, then, there is not only no evidence in the New Testament *for* any such central authority, but very strong evidence *against* its being, in any sense *essential* to the Church.

4. But the point which Roman-catholics love most to dwell on is the *weakness of private judgment*, which they represent as a prevailing reason why we should rather give ourselves up to the direction of an infallible guide. In answer to this, several Protestant writers have very well defended the *right* of private judgement: others have preferred to regard it as a *duty*; and, in truth, the exercise of it is both a *right* and a *duty*; or rather, a right *because* it is a duty. But the most important consideration of all is the *necessity* of private judgment. A man who resolves to place himself under a certain guide to be implicitly followed, and decides that such and such a Church is the appointed infallible guide, does decide, on his own private judgment, *that one* most important point, which includes in it all other decisions relative to religion. And, if by his own showing, he is *unfit to judge* at all, he can have no ground for confidence that he has decided rightly in that. And if, accordingly, he will not trust himself to judge even on this point, but resolves to consult his priest, or some other friends, and be led

entirely by *their* judgment thereupon, still he does, in thus resolving, exercise his own judgment as to the counsellors he so relies on. The responsibility of forming *some* judgment is one which, however unfit we may deem ourselves to bear it, we cannot possibly get rid of, in any matter about which we really feel an anxious care. It is laid upon us by God, and we cannot shake it off. Before a man can rationally *judge* that he should *submit his judgment* in other things to the Church of Rome, he must first have judged, 1. That there is a God; 2. That Christianity comes from God; 3. That Christ has promised to give an infallible authority in the Church; 4. That such authority resides in the Church of Rome. Now, to say that men who are competent to form sound judgments upon these points are quite incompetent to form sound judgments about any other matters in religion, is very like saying, that men may have sound judgments of their own *before* they enter the Church of Rome, but that they *lose* all sound judgment entirely from the moment they enter it.

The true use of this topic of the weakness of private judgment, is to make us modest in our decisions,—not pretending to more certainty than we have, or claiming any absolute security from error; and diligent in seeking all we can, to inform and strengthen our judgments. Thus when the Apostles found men “babes” and “weak,” they were not content to *leave* them so; but trained and instructed them till they became “full-grown men,” and “exercised their senses,” [powers of discrimination] that they might “by use,” be able to “distinguish good and evil.” And when addressing such persons, they “spoke as to wise men,” and bade them “judge what was said;” commanding them to “prove [try] all things, and hold fast what was good.”

5. But Roman-catholics sometimes tell us that there is in the New Testament, the express command, “Hear the Church;” and that therefore we are bound to submit implicitly to the Church’s decisions upon all points of doctrine. There is nothing more necessary, in answer to this, than to lay before you the text which is profanely *caricatured* in this argument.

“If thy brother shall *trespass against* thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall *hear thee*, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take

with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to *hear them*, tell it unto the Church: but if he neglect to *hear the Church*, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." (Matth. xviii. 15—17.) Here it is manifest that (not doctrines, but) disputes between man and man are spoken of; and that the Church mentioned is (not the Universal, but) some particular Church or congregation. Now the Roman-catholics themselves do not believe that the decisions of particular congregations are infallibly true.

6. Again, when Roman-catholics would persuade us to receive their *traditions* of doctrine as certain truths, without examining them by the test of Scripture, they are fond of reminding us that it is by *tradition* only that we have the Scriptures themselves. But when you meet such persons, you may ask them, whether they would as readily believe the correctness of a report transmitted by *word of mouth in popular rumours*, from one end of the kingdom to another, as if it came in a *letter*, passed from one person to another over the same space? Would they think, that because they could trust most servants to deliver a letter, however long or important, *therefore*, they could trust the same men to deliver the contents of a long and important letter in a message by word of mouth? Let us put a familiar case. A footman brings you a letter from a friend, upon whose word you can perfectly rely, giving an account of something that has happened to himself, and the exact account of which you are greatly concerned to know. While you are reading and answering the letter, the footman goes into the kitchen, and there gives your cook an account of the same thing; which, he says, he overheard the upper-servants at home talking over, as related to them by the valet, who said he had it from your friend's son's own lips. The cook relates the story to your groom, and he, in turn, tells you. Would you judge of that *story* by the letter, or the *letter* by the story?

The case of the Jewish Church is an apt illustration of the difference of security in the tradition of Scripture and the tradition of Doctrine. The Jews, we know, faithfully preserved the writings of the Old Testament, which were entrusted to them. Nor do Christ and his Apostles ever charge them with corrupting or destroying their Sacred Books, as no doubt they

would have done, if the Jews had been guilty of any such crime. But our Saviour *does* blame them for "making the Word of God of none effect by their traditions," and "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Might not the Jews argue, in their turn, that if we receive the Old Testament from them, we should also receive their traditions? the *oral* law (as they call it) no less than the *written* law? But our Saviour always teaches the people to bring the traditions of the elders to the test of the written word.

But besides the uncertainty of traditions which *are* received in the Church of Rome, there is an *additional* uncertainty to each individual Roman-catholic, *what* are so received. If he asks his Priest why such or such a point is believed, or thing done, and is told, "such is the tradition of the church;" let him ask again, "how did *you* learn that?" It will be found, by pushing such inquiries, that the Priest learnt it from a book, which *reports* that something has been *reported* by one of the ancient Fathers, as having been *reported* to him, as believed by those who had heard it *reported* that the Apostles taught it!

Are we then to reject Tradition altogether? The question is as foolish as if you were to ask, whether *books* or whether *witnesses* are to be believed or not. Some things said by them are true, some are false, and many mixed. It is just the same with Traditions. The *test* is Scripture; not only because written accounts are, in their nature, more to be relied upon than reports by word of mouth, but also because it is plain that the Apostles and Evangelists *wrote* their books to guard against the uncertainties of mere tradition. Thus Luke tells Theophilus* that he had written an account of our Lord's life and teaching, that Theophilus "might know the *certainty* [the exact state of the case] of those things wherein he had been instructed." And John and Paul, upon two occasions,† correct false reports (that is, traditions) which had gone abroad among Christians even in their own day.

It is a foolish thing to say that Tradition is to be held to rather than Scripture, *because* Tradition was before Scripture: since Scripture [i. e. written records] was used on purpose, *after tradition had been tried*, to guard against the dangers of Tradition. Thus to prefer, therefore, the imperfect thing [tradition]

* Luke, i. 3, 4.

† John, xxi. 23. 2 Thess. ii. 1—5.

to the more perfect improvement on it,—scripture—reminds one of the excuse made by dirty feeders, that “fingers were *made before forks.*”

Tradition, then, is not the *Interpreter of Scripture*, but Scripture is the *Interpreter of Tradition*. What has come down to us for tradition, if agreeable to Scripture, is to be received; if opposed to it, to be rejected; if neither, is to be left in uncertainty.

But the Roman-catholic traditions have partly *contradicted*, and partly *gone beyond* Scripture, and partly *perverted* its obvious sense, as we shall point out in our next address to you.

7. The Roman-catholics are fond of boasting that *their* Church is *unchangeable*; and you will sometimes meet this same assertion respecting the Church of Rome not only admitted, but even put forward by Protestants, when they wish to fasten upon the Roman-catholics of the present day some charge that might have been truly brought against persons of that communion long ago. But Roman-catholics act much more wisely than Protestants in making this assertion; for the Roman Church *was* certainly a pure one in the Apostles’ times; and, if it has *never* changed since then, how can it be corrupt now? The Protestants, indeed, will answer, “Oh yes, it has; only not *since* it became corrupt; nor ever can.” But this also gives an advantage to the Roman-catholic. For, if all the monstrous list of (alleged) corruptions came *in at once*, and have never altered since, surely one should be able to point out *when* this *mighty change* took place; or, if not (which is clearly impossible), it will follow that it *never did take place at all*.

The truth is, however, that the Church of Rome has been frequently changing, and the corruptions crept in *gradually*, and a few at a time; and thence, no one can say when *they began*, any more than one can say when a man or a garment begins to be *old*. Only, on comparing the present Church of Rome with Scripture, it becomes plain that vast alterations *have* taken place.

When you meet with a Roman-catholic who boasts of his Church as *unchangeable*, you may ask him, What Church translated the Scriptures into Latin? and for *what purpose*? He will (if he knows anything at all about the matter) be forced to confess that the Scriptures were translated into Latin by the

Church of Rome (or persons in communion with it), for the purpose of being read, both privately and in the public meetings of the Church, in a language *understood by the people*; Latin being then the language commonly spoken in the West of Europe and North Africa. Yet the Church of Rome *now* reads the Lessons in the public Service in Latin, though it is *not understood* by the people; and it is only *since the Reformation* that Roman-catholics have been at all diligent to translate the Bible into languages understood by the common people, or to circulate such translations.

You might ask him, too, if there was not a time when all the chief teachers of his Church—from the Pope down to the Parish Priest—taught men that it was the *duty* of true believers to *persecute* heretics? and he will be forced to own that there was. You may observe to him, therefore, that if any one then found out the duty of toleration, it must have been by private judgment in opposition to the guides of the Church; and that, if the duty of toleration is now owned by the Roman-catholics (as it has been owned by many of them *since the Reformation*), that is a *great change*, and a change made by private judgment entirely; since the Popes and Councils of the Church of Rome have never *declared* that persecuting heretics is *not* a duty, and that tolerating them *is*.

8. Roman-catholics are also apt to boast of their Church's freedom from *divisions* and dissension. But in this they manifestly contradict their own claim to be the Catholic (Universal) Church. For, if they regard Protestants as members—though revolted members—of their Church, then the very existence of Protestants (to say nothing of the Greek, the Armenian, and other Churches) proves that their Church is not exempt from divisions and dissensions. If they say that the doctrine and proceedings of Protestants &c. are *condemned* by the authorities of the Church of Rome, and all its *sound* members, that is no answer to the objection. For, *exemption* from a certain evil must consist, not in its being *censured* when it arises, but in its *not arising* at all. Indeed, it would be very easy, and also quite trifling, for any Church whatever to set up the boast that its doctrines are received by all,—except those who dissent from them; and that all submit to its authority,—except those who refuse submission. Doubtless, if all mankind, or any number of

men, would but come to a perfect agreement in *any* one religion—be it *true* or *false*—they could not but be exempt from religious dissension, and if not from error, at least from anything that they themselves would account an error.

What would be thought if an Englishman were to boast to a Hindoo or a Chinese, that London enjoys the happiness of being exempt from all crimes, and also from conflagrations; and should afterwards explain his meaning to be, that all crimes are forbidden by law; the person offending being liable when detected and taken up, to be punished as the law directs; and that, though fires do break out from time to time, there are fire-engines ready to be called out on such occasions?

However, it is not true that the Church of Rome is, even in their own sense of the word, exempt from *divisions* and dissensions. The great means of unity, according to most of them, is the authority of the Pope; yet they are not agreed among themselves about the extent of the Pope's authority; some thinking the Pope infallible, others denying that he is,—some making him superior to a General Council, others inferior, &c. Nay, learned men have reckoned up at least twenty-four fierce schisms* and dissensions (some of them very bloody) about *who* was Pope; when several rivals each claimed to be the true Pope, and condemned all others as impostors. Again, they are divided among themselves about many of the same things as Protestants are divided about; as free will, predestination, &c.; besides many disputes which have no place among *us*.

Lately there has appeared in Ireland a remarkable division among the Bishops of the Roman-catholic Church there; a Tract on the Evidences of Christianity, which merely sets forth some strong reasons for believing the Christian religion to be true, being sanctioned by one Prelate, and denounced by another.† The fact is that, besides other differences, there are some Roman-catholics who are sincere believers in the truth (at least) of Christianity; and *these* think it a good thing to set before men the proofs of it; others of them either believe or

* One of these lasted from 1378 to 1429, more than half a century.

† It was submitted, by the late Roman-catholic Archbishop Murray, as a book to be used in the Irish National Schools, to the late Pope, who had it read to him into Italian, and gave it his approval. Since then, it has appeared in an Italian translation (which is to be had at Messrs. Parker's) by a Roman-catholic Priest at Florence. But it has been denounced by persons holding high stations in the Church of Rome, as heterodox and dangerous. "Who shall decide, when doctors disagree?"

strongly suspect that it is a fable of man's devising, though a very useful delusion; and these are afraid of inquiry and reasoning, which they think would shake men's faith; and so prefer basing the truth of Christianity on the authority of the Church; and trusting that men will never think of asking, "If the authority of the Church does not rest on the truth of Christianity, on what does it?"

January, 1851.

No. III.

"I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say."—1 Cor. x. 15.

WE trust that you are better qualified than we fear some others are, to detect and expose the arts by which any one may seek to seduce you into the Romish communion. For we have always encouraged, and endeavoured to teach you, to "prove (that is, try) all things," and hold fast that which is right.

Some well-meaning men, on the contrary, exhort their people to believe what they are told, without seeking any reason for it, thinking this would unsettle their minds. They forget that such people (1) may be easily brought to believe, on equally good grounds—that is, from being *earnestly assured* of it—in Romanism or Mormonism, or anything else: and (2) that, if any of them do begin to reflect at all, they will think there is a strong presumption against the truth of Christianity, or of *our* doctrines, from their defenders being afraid of inquiry. Certainly, if the teachers of any religion really *were* conscious that the religion which they taught could not stand an examination into its evidence, and had no good reasons to support it, then, to discourage all inquiry, desiring people to believe without proof shown, would be just the course that such teachers would be likely to follow. In point of fact, it *is* the course which the teachers of false religions commonly do follow. When a young man, therefore, who has been brought up to believe in Christianity without a reason for his belief, and has even been told, that to ask for any reason of the hope that is in him is wrong and impious,—when such a young man comes to hear that other people, in other countries, are trained in the same way to believe quite contrary things to what he has been taught, he is naturally led to suspect that *all* religions stand on the same foot; that "priests of all religions" are "the same" crafty impostors; and that, since *all* follow the same method of getting men to believe

without a reason, it is because none of them have any good reason to give.

Accordingly—since such a course is always likely to favour infidelity in the long run—infidels are ever ready to join with weak Christians, in alleging, that believing without any reason is true Christian Faith; being sure that if this point be once settled, they will have no difficulty in convincing any rational person that true Christian Faith is the most absurd thing in the world.

But true Christian Faith is that which Jesus Christ and his Apostles required and commended; and you will find, in the New Testament, that they never required or commended belief without evidence. On the contrary, they blamed the Jews and the heathens for taking on trust what they had merely “received by tradition from their fathers,” and suffering themselves “to be carried away even as they were led;” and they never put forward their own doctrines without giving sufficient proof of their truth. Thus our Lord constantly appealed to the evidence of his miracles, and of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, which the Jews (with whom He was reasoning) acknowledged to be divinely inspired. The Apostles, besides such proofs as these, came forward as WITNESSES of his resurrection; and they have delivered down their testimony to that and other miraculous facts in the writings of the New Testament. “These things,” says the Evangelist John, speaking of Christ’s miracles wrought in the presence of his disciples, “are written *that ye might believe*, and that, *believing*, ye might *have life* through his name.” In these words that Apostle plainly declares that faith was to be grounded upon evidence; and that such a faith, so grounded upon the evidence of miracles, was true christian *saving* Faith. He was, consequently, of a quite different opinion from those who would persuade us, that though our faith may be *vindicated* by an appeal to the evidence of miracles, it should not be *grounded* on that evidence, and is mere worthless *historic* faith (as they call it) if it is so grounded.

Sometimes, indeed, in the New Testament, persons seem to be blamed for demanding, before they would believe, *more* proof than had been given them: but that is plainly because refusing to believe when we have *sufficiently* good proof already, is a mark of a *prejudiced* mind. We should be glad, indeed, to get all

the proof we can; but we have no right to say that we will not attend to, or be determined by, good evidence, because it is not the very strongest we can think of. Those who were so obstinately bent on their old prejudices of a conquering Messiah, and so tenacious of "the traditions of the elders," that nothing but the most forcible proofs could *extort* (as it were) from them belief in Jesus Christ, were plainly less to be commended, than candid truth-loving persons, who received him as soon as ever they were shown *sufficient* evidence of his having been sent from God.

You will not, then, be disturbed by men's pretending that you should not attempt to reason about religion, because you are not "expert logicians." Logic and grammar are excellent and useful things; but men may be able to reason without having studied logic, as they may be able to talk good English without being skilful grammarians. The rules of logic were discovered by *observing* what men did when they reasoned correctly; so that men must have been able to reason before logic was invented; and the invention of logic has not surely *taken away* from men any power which they had before.

Nicodemus, and the blind man, of whom the Evangelist John tells us, had probably, neither of them ever heard of *sylogism*—(which is the name by which logicians call an act of reasoning)—yet they argued correctly enough, when they said, that Jesus was a teacher sent from God, because He did such miracles. People would laugh at a man who should tell them that a jury could not try a cause, or a farmer judge what crops would suit his ground, because they had not learned logic. Yet neither the jury nor the farmer can come to any conclusion without *reasoning*.

But the most absurd thing of all is, that it is always by some *reason* or other, that these persons seek to persuade you to *renounce your reason*; to *argue* men into *neglecting arguments*; and *prove* to them that they *cannot judge of proofs*.

If any one who has turned Roman-catholic, or has been so brought up, exhorts you to change your religion, assuring you that you ought to submit your judgment to that of the holy Church, since you are not *competent to judge of* religious questions yourself; ask him, *Why* should I do so? Ought I to change my religion without any *reason* for it,—without knowing

whether I may not be embracing falsehood and blasphemy? Then, if he proceeds to offer you reasons for it, stop him on the outset by asking, *Am* I then competent to judge of good or bad reasons?

If he answer in the affirmative (thus giving up his original point), you may claim the right of bringing the doctrine of his Church to the *test* of Scripture. Now there are many points in the teaching of the Church of Rome which, when it is examined by this test, will at once be discovered to be unsound. We will take this opportunity of mentioning some of them.

1. For example :—No one Church appears to have borne rule over all the Churches Paul founded. (1.) He speaks of *himself* as having “the care of all the Churches” which he had founded resting upon him; but never refers to the Church of Rome, or the Apostle Peter, as having any superintendence over him, or the Churches founded by him. We find him speaking of “the apostleship of the uncircumcision being committed unto” himself—that is, of his being specially called to preach and found Churches among the Gentiles, and specially blessed with success in that work: while “the apostleship of the circumcision” was, in the same way, “committed unto Peter.” We find that he was so far from submitting to Peter as a decisive authority, that, on the contrary, on one occasion he withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed: and, in writing to the Church at Rome, he never drops a hint of its then having, or being destined to have, any the least authority or pre-eminence over other Churches. Nor is there the least trace, throughout the whole of the New Testament, of Peter’s exercising any act of sovereignty over all the Churches. But if Peter had been, as the Roman-catholics say, the sovereign of the whole Church, and the vicar of Christ upon earth, it is not credible that in the history of that Church which he governed, and in his own letters, and in the letters of the other apostles, (who must then have acted under his control,) there should be no mention at all ever made of his having or exercising such a sovereignty. Peter, indeed, is so far from being described, in the Acts of the Apostles, as *sending* the other apostles where he would, that we read of their *sending him*, along with John, to confirm the Church in Samaria. Acts, viii. 14. So that, to say that Peter had the same supremacy over the whole Church as the

Popes now claim, is not only to say more than can be proved by Scripture, but to say what can be *disproved* by Scripture; since if he really had that supremacy, and if knowing him to have had it were a matter of the greatest importance, it could not but have been referred to in the Scripture-history and the writings of the Apostles, just as the acts and authority of Pius IX. as Pope could not but be mentioned by any zealous Roman-catholic relating the history of that Church in the year 1850; or the royal acts of Queen Victoria, by an historian who professed to give an account of the state of England during her reign.

• However distinguished, then, Peter was among the Apostles, he certainly was not their sovereign; and therefore, when Roman-catholics cite places of Scripture in which Peter is put first amongst the Apostles, or is spoken of as most forward on any occasion, or mentioned with some special honour, you may tell them that all this is nothing at all to the purpose, because it does not prove that Peter had any control or authority over the rest, any more than the foreman of a jury has over the rest of the panel.*

(2.) But the Roman-catholics maintain, not only that Peter had this supremacy, but that it has passed from him to the Bishops of Rome, who, they say, succeed Peter in all the fulness of his *apostolic* office. But this is mere pretence. It cannot be proved from Scripture that Peter was ever at Rome—much less that he was Bishop of the Church in that city. If he was Bishop of Rome, the Bishops of Rome may be his *successors in the bishopric*—(and so may be the Bishops of Antioch, too; for he is said to have been Bishop there also before he went to Rome)—but not as *Apostles*; any more than the successors in the peerage of a rector of a parish who happens to be a peer, are his successors as *rectors*, or the rectors as *peers*. Queen Victoria succeeded King William IV. in Britain, as the Duke of Cumberland did in Hanover; but Queen Victoria did not succeed William IV. as Sovereign of Hanover, nor the King of

* As for our Lord's promise to Peter, "upon this *Rock* I will build my Church," it is plain that the same privilege was afterwards conferred on *all* the Apostles; who are spoken of as, together with Christ, "the corner stone," the *foundation* of the Church. Ephes. ii. 20. Compare Rev. xxi. 14. And the promise, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth," &c. Matth. xvi. 19, is afterwards made to *all* the Apostles, Matth. xviii. 18.

Hanover as Sovereign of Britain. It is never said in Scripture that the Apostles were to have successors *as Apostles*; but, on the contrary, it is implied that they were not. For the chief part of their apostolic dignity consisted in their being witnesses of Christ's resurrection—having “seen Jesus Christ the Lord”—and in the miraculous gifts of the Spirit with which they were endowed, and in their power of bestowing these on others. Now, these qualifications of an Apostle have not been imparted to the Bishops of Rome, or to any one else, since the true Apostles died. If then, the Pope, or any other person, claims to be an apostle in the same sense as Peter was, you may fairly require him to show you, as Peter did, “the signs of an Apostle,” before you admit his pretensions.

2. Again, the invocation of *departed* saints, and especially of the Blessed Virgin Mary, as practised in the Church of Rome, is a thing plainly contrary to the spirit of the Gospel. For—not to mention that it is at least very doubtful as to some of their so-called saints, whether they ever existed at all,—and as to others, whether they were not mere crazy fanatics,—and, as to others, whether they were not very wicked men,—not to mention this, and supposing these “saints” to have been all really good Christians, you will readily see that asking a *dead* person to pray for you, when you do not know him to be present, is quite a different thing from asking a *living* person to pray for you. The Scriptures never tell us that the dead can hear or know the requests which men make to them; so that asking their prayer *at all* is a piece of “will-worship” that cannot be justified. We might, for all that appears, just as reasonably go down on our knees and ask a good man in America to pray for us. But when it came to be believed that a holy person, when *removed from earth*, can hear the addresses of thousands and millions calling on him in all parts of the world, and can know the secret dispositions of mind in each several person that invokes him, this belief did, in fact, *deify* him. Whatever subtle explanations may be attempted of the way in which “glorified saints” are able to hear, from various regions, and repeat, more prayers in the day than there are minutes in the twenty-four hours, it is plain that at least the great mass of their worshippers must regard them no less as *gods* than the ancient pagans did the Beings they worshipped. For the pagans

acknowledged that many of the gods whom they worshipped had been MEN; only they fancied that, after death, their souls had obtained great power and influence over the management of things in the world; which is what was meant by calling them *gods*.

Now, as the Almighty has declared Himself to be "A JEALOUS God"—just as unwilling to have his honour impaired as if He were jealous of it—and as He always treated the conduct of the pagans in thus praying to dead men as idolatry, it cannot be safe in us to encourage anything like a practice which He abhors; particularly as, even if the saints *can* hear our prayers, there is plainly no *necessity* for praying to them, since God invites us at all times to "come boldly" to Himself, through the one Mediator, Jesus Christ. It is much *safer*, then, certainly, *not* to pray to the saints, if God has not required us to do so, than to invoke them, especially (as the Roman-catholics do), in the same posture—at the same time—in the same place—and even in the same form of words,—as we invoke God Almighty.

Now, God has nowhere in Scripture required us to invoke the saints. On the contrary, the New Testament seems framed purposely to guard all who are sincerely desirous of following its guidance against such a practice. Though we find, in the Book of Acts, narratives of the deaths of the two martyrs, Stephen, and James the Apostle, the brother of John, there is no mention of their being invoked after death. And when God saw fit to convey his commands to Cornelius, and again to Paul (Acts, x. and xxvii.) by a created Being, it is not one of those blessed Martyrs, but an Angel that is sent.

The Virgin Mary, again, is never (but once, and then very slightly)* so much as named throughout the Acts and Apostolic Epistles. Now, this silence respecting her is utterly inconceivable, supposing it had been the practice of the early Christians to pray to her. In the Gospels, again, she is but rarely mentioned. And on three of the most remarkable occasions on which she is mentioned, it is apparently on purpose to discourage anything like adoration of her. At the marriage-feast at Cana, our Lord checks her interference. (John, ii. 3, 4.) And on the two other occasions (Matth. xii. 50—Luke, xi. 27), he takes pains to impress upon his hearers that, in his sight, the ties of

* Acts, i. 14.

kindred are as nothing in comparison of obedience to God's will.

3. Again, the practice of reading the Scriptures and reciting the prayers in the public assemblies of the Church in an *unknown tongue*, is not only contrary to reason and Scripture, but even to the former practice of the Church of Rome itself.

What the Apostle Paul says (1 Cor. xiv.), is sufficient by itself to show this practice to be contrary *both* to Scripture and to reason; since he there not only forbids such a practice by his authority, but proves it, by plain arguments, to be absurd.

It appears that some of those persons who had been miraculously enabled to speak foreign languages (called in that chapter *unknown tongues*, because their meaning was *unknown* to the common people at Corinth), were fond of showing off the power which they enjoyed by publicly praying, and addressing discourses to the congregation in those strange tongues, without, at the same time, explaining the sense of what they said. This practice the Apostle condemns as absurd. He shows that the object of words spoken is to be understood; that they are *signs* which stand for something else; and that a sign is of no value, unless it can be known what it *signifies*. (1 Cor. xiv. 7, 9.) He observes that, when a minister prays or blesses God in a foreign language, the unlearned part of the congregation cannot (reasonably) express their assent by saying *Amen*, since they do not understand what he says. For his own part he declares that in the Church [congregation] he had rather speak five words with his understanding [that is, so as to convey his mind to others] than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. He puts the case of a stranger coming into one of their assemblies, and observing ministers speaking publicly in a language not understood by the people, and he asks, "Would he not say that ye were mad?"

Now all this applies still more strongly to the practice of the Roman-catholics. They have not the excuse (such as it was) of saying, that the Priest's knowledge of Latin is a miraculous gift, the public display of which might redound to the glory of God. Nor has it been always the case with them that even the Priests themselves understood the Latin prayers and lessons which they read; as Paul allows that those gifted persons were themselves edified by what they spoke in strange languages. But

in other respects, the cases are alike: and, if the Apostle Paul were to come into a Roman-catholic chapel, during the time of mass, and find the priest inviting the people, in an unknown tongue, to pray with him—then going on to pray as if they were joining him,—but still in an unknown tongue, and then turning about, apparently to be well heard, and reading them a lesson out of Scripture, in a language which they did not understand,—it is hard to suppose he would think that those who did thus, “held fast the traditions which he had delivered to them.” Indeed, this practice of the Roman-catholics is so flagrantly unreasonable, that they themselves would have perceived its absurdity, and probably refused to bear with it, if it had been introduced all *at once*. But it was not. It *grew* up imperceptibly through a long course of years. It was not caused by men’s having from the first a superstitious dread of any attempt to translate the Scriptures at all. For if so, the Roman church would not have *translated* them into Latin, but left them in the original Hebrew and Greek. But the Scriptures were *translated* into Latin, when that was the prevailing language, on *purpose* that they might be accessible to the people. And they were publicly read *in Latin* that the people might understand them: and the prayers were said in Latin for the same reason. Afterwards, when Latin gradually ceased to be spoken—first in the provinces,—and then even at Rome itself; still divine Services continued to be performed in that language. Thus, though time had changed the Latin from a *well-known* to an *unknown* language, people fancied that they were *keeping things as they were*, because the Service was still read in Latin. But since it was first read in Latin, in order that the people might understand it, continuing to read it in Latin, when the people no longer understood that language, is clearly *a change of principles*; which is a much more serious thing than any mere change of practice.

Latterly, indeed, since the Reformation, the Roman-catholics have, to some extent, *changed again*. For they allow, in some places, translations of the Scriptures into the common languages of different countries, to be circulated more or less freely, according to circumstances, and they have printed Prayer-books with translations of the Latin prayers; and in some parts of England they perform some of their public worship (though not the *mass*) in English.

Now this is, in fact, acknowledging that their former practice was wrong; and it is probable that they would now permit even the mass to be said in English here, if a decree of the Council of Trent (which they regard as *infallible*) did not stand in their way.

That decree is altogether such a curious one, that a Protestant can hardly read it without smiling. It is as follows: "*Though the mass contains great instruction to the faithful, yet it has not seemed good to the Fathers that it should everywhere be celebrated in the vulgar tongue. Wherefore, retaining everywhere the ancient custom of each church, approved by the holy Roman church, the mother and Mistress of all churches, lest the sheep of Christ should be famished, and the little ones ask bread and there be none to break it to them, the holy Synod commands the pastors and all who have the cure of souls, that they shall frequently during the celebration of mass, either by themselves or others, explain some part of what is read in the mass; and amongst other things, declare some mystery of this most holy sacrifice, especially on Sundays and festivals.*" And they add: "If any shall say that the mass should only be celebrated in the vulgar tongue, let him be accursed!"

Yet some Roman-catholics are so far from seeing the absurdity of this (or at least from *owning* it), that it has even been made a matter of boast by some of them, that, in a foreign country, a priest going thither ignorant of its language, can at once perform Service as at home; and that a traveller, equally ignorant of the language of the country, can attend the Service of the Church, which is the same everywhere; while a member of any other communion would be at a loss.

This is as if a blind man should make it a matter of boast that he is not incommoded by the short days of winter, and has no occasion for candles. That day and night are alike to him, would indeed be an advantage, if he could see in *both*; but not when the case is that he can see in *neither*.

4. Another point in which the teaching of the Church of Rome is plainly contrary to Scripture is *transubstantiation*.

Roman-catholics hold that, when Christ, at the last Supper, taking the bread in his hands, said, "This is my body," he meant,— "This is no longer bread, but is changed into my body." Such, they say, is the *natural*, because *literal* sense of the words.

(1.) But even if it were the *literal* sense, it would not follow from that, that it was the *natural* sense of the words: because the natural sense is that (whether figurative or literal) in which the persons, who heard Him speaking at the time, would *naturally* and reasonably understand his words. For instance, when, on the same occasion, our Lord said, “*This cup* is the New Testament [covenant] in my blood,”—neither the Roman-catholics nor we suppose that He meant to speak literally of *the cup* which he held in his hands: but we both agree that here “the cup” is put, by a common figure, for the *cup-full of wine*, which the company were drinking. In this case, therefore, we both agree that the *figurative* sense (not the *literal*) is the *natural* meaning of our Saviour’s words. Again, if in explaining a map, I were to point to a part of it and say, “This is France,” no one would think that I meant that a part of that sheet of paper or canvas was *literally* France; that would not be the natural sense of my words. Nor, if I showed you a picture, and said,—“That is the Queen,” would you think I meant to say that it was *literally* Queen Victoria.

Now it would not have naturally occurred to the Apostles, when they heard Christ say of the bread, “This is my body,” and saw it continue in his hands just the same (to all appearance) as it was before; and when they ate it up, that He was then working a miracle,—that He was holding his own body in his own hands—and that they were, each of them, eating up his body, while He sat there all the while conversing with them. But, on the contrary, they would *naturally* have understood Him to be speaking *figuratively*: because they knew that He was then appointing a religious rite; and they (as Jews) were quite accustomed to figurative religious rites. Indeed, they had just been celebrating one such figurative religious rite,—the Passover; in which a lamb was eaten, *representing* the Lamb which their forefathers had sacrificed on the night they left Egypt; and *bitter* herbs, *representing* the affliction they had been under; and *unleavened* bread, *representing* the hastily-made bread which they took with them in their flight, when there was no time to leaven it. And it is the custom still among the Jews for the master of every household to explain to his family, when eating the Passover, the meaning of the rite; saying, for example, when the bitter herbs are laid on the table, “This is the food of affliction

which our fathers ate in Egypt," &c. &c. The Apostles, therefore, would naturally have understood our Saviour to be, in the same way, explaining the meaning of a figurative rite of his religion, and would have taken Him to mean—"This bread *represents*, or stands for, my body," &c. &c. For such a way of speaking is quite common, and was often used by our Lord, when explaining figures. So, in explaining the parable of the Tares in the field, He says: "The field *is* the world—the good seed *is* the children of the kingdom—the Tares *are* the children of the wicked one—the Reapers *are* the angels," &c. Meaning that the field of which He had been speaking stood for, or represented the world:—and so of the rest. The Apostles, who had often heard Jesus speak thus before, would, therefore, have naturally understood Him to be speaking in the same way then.

(2.) Did they, then, learn afterwards to put another meaning on his words? On the contrary, we find Paul expressly calling that which is eaten in the Communion, "bread," even after it has been solemnly set apart as the Sign of Christ's Body. "The *bread* which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one *bread* and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread [loaf]." (1 Cor. x. 16, 17.) And again: "As often as ye eat *this bread* and drink this cup, ye do *show the Lord's death* till He come. *Wherefore*, whosoever shall eat this *bread* and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily [in a manner unworthy of the solemn rite] is guilty of [*that is*, is culpable in respect of] the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that *bread* and drink of that cup." (xi. 26, 27, 28.) Where he distinctly explains that it is *because*, in eating the bread and drinking the wine at the Communion, we *show forth*—exhibit the representation of the Lord's death, *therefore* he who partakes of it rashly and indecently (as you will find from that chapter the Corinthians did) is guilty of an insult to the Lord's body and blood, not of mere indecorum at a common meal. The Apostle Paul, then, plainly calls what is eaten at the Lord's Supper *bread*, even after it had been made a Sign or Symbol of the Lord's body. In answer to this, the Roman-catholics say, that the Apostle speaks *figuratively*,—calling it *bread*, because it once was, and still appears so. But it is very strange that men should chuse to suspect a figure, in calling that bread, which certainly was, and still seems to all a

man's senses to be real bread ; and yet not to suspect any figure in calling that Christ's body, which was made by a baker, and neither had nor assumes any resemblance whatever to human flesh.

(3.) But, indeed, the meaning which they (when they explain themselves) give to Christ's words is not, after all, the *literal* meaning of them. For in common speech we describe things, not by their substances (of which we know nothing directly) but by their qualities. We call that, bread, which has such a colour, smell, taste, power of nourishing, and so forth. No one would think of calling a mole-hill a mountain, though all the matter of the mountain were pressed into the size of a mole-hill. We should say, in that case, that the mountain had become, or shrunk into, a mole-hill. So, when Moses' Rod assumed the appearance of a serpent, it is said that his *Rod became a serpent* ; not that a serpent *became his Rod*. Now, according to the Roman-catholics the *substance* of Christ's body in the Communion has none of the *attributes* of flesh, but appears under all the *attributes* of bread. Therefore, in ordinary speech, we should say that (if this be so) Christ's body becomes bread ; not that bread becomes Christ's body. To suppose our Lord, when He says, "This is my body," to mean "the *substance* of this bread, without a change in any of its qualities, is changed into the *substance* of my body, only *without* any one outward quality of flesh," is certainly not to suppose Him to speak *literally*, but in the most dark and perplexed (not to say unintelligible) language that ever was uttered. And to say that this is a *natural* and *obvious* meaning of his words, is what scarce any one would venture to say who had not been carefully *trained up* to believe it such.

5. Again, the Roman-catholics maintain that their clergy are **PRIESTS** in the sense of the word in which it means persons who offer up real expiatory *sacrifices* for the people.

You must remember that this word *Priest* has two very different meanings, which are very often confounded.

Originally, *Priest* was only a contraction [or shortening] of the word *Presbyter* ; and it meant properly the same as *Presbyter* ; that is an *Elder* of the Church. In this sense it is used in our Prayer-books, wherever our clergy are called *Priests* ; *Priests* or *Presbyters*, being the middle rank of our clergy, above *Deacons* and below *Bishops*.

But *Priest*, in another meaning of the word, means a person appointed to offer up sacrifices to God for others: and in this sense it is used in our translation of the Bible; in which the word *Elder* is put in place of it wherever Presbyters are spoken of. In the English *Bible* therefore, *PRIEST* means a *Sacrificer*: in the English *Prayer-book*, *PRIEST* means an *Elder*, or Presbyter.

Now, the Roman-catholics say that their Priests are *Sacrificers*. For they think that, in the Communion, the Priest offers up the real body and blood of Christ as an expiatory sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead. And they deem the power of *making* (so they express it) the body and blood of Christ, the great power of the Priesthood; and the office of offering them as a sacrifice to God the most dignified office of the Priesthood.

The question is: Did the Apostles agree with them?

Now, throughout the whole New Testament, the Sacred Writers speak of no [Sacrificing] *Priest* under the Gospel-scheme, but Jesus Christ Himself: and they do continually tell us that He is *our Priest*. They speak of no atoning sacrifice, but the one oblation of Christ *once offered* for our sins; and they tell us that, by that sacrifice, sin has been *for ever put away*,—that is, all obstacles to the free pardon of sin, on repentance, removed entirely. They speak of no Altar, but that in Heaven,—“the Holy place not made with hands.”

Nor is this all: but, even when searching for a parallel in the christian worship to the sacrifices of the Law, and for something in the christian ministry corresponding to the priestly office,—even in such *figurative* allusions to the rites of the Old Testament,—their minds never turn to the Eucharist [Lord’s Supper], as a thing that should be, even *figuratively*, described as a Sacrifice. Thus, (Heb. xiii. 15, 16,) the Apostle Paul describes the sort of sacrifices which Christians can offer, as *contrasted with those of the Jews*. “By Christ, [through Him, not through our Clergy,] let us offer the *sacrifice of praise* to God continually, *even the fruit of our lips*, giving thanks to his name. But *to do good*, and *to communicate* [impart of our wealth to our needy brethren] forget not: for with *such sacrifices* God is well pleased.” And again, (Rom. xii. 1,) “I beseech you that ye present your bodies, a *living sacrifice*, holy, acceptable

to God, which is your reasonable [rational] service." Following out the same thought, (of Christians being themselves a sacrifice to God,) the *Preacher* who, by publishing the Gospel and persuading men to receive it, makes his converts such an *acceptable sacrifice*, is, in one place, *figuratively* described as, in that respect, resembling a Priest. In Rom. xv. 16, Paul describes himself as "*ministering* [in respect of] the Gospel of God, that the offering up [oblation] of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. I have therefore," he adds, "whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in things pertaining to God." All which he further explains in the next verses, by relating how God had enabled him to *make the Gentiles obedient*, and to *preach the Gospel* more extensively amongst the Gentiles than any one else had. Thus you see that, when Paul is actually *searching* for something in his own office to parallel with the functions of a Priest, it is to his character as a Preacher of the Gospel,—as a converter of men [the living sacrifices] to God, that his mind turns; and not to the privilege of consecrating the bread and wine in the Communion.

Nor is there, from one end to the other of the New Testament, the least allusion to that privilege as (we do not say the chief, but) any *exclusive privilege* of the Christian ministry at all. The duties and dignities of the ministry are described often and largely by the Apostles; but the mysterious power of *making the body and blood* of Christ, and offering it up for sins, is never so much as glanced at in a single passage.

Now it is quite incredible, that if the Apostles really believed that there were Sacrificing Priests under the Gospel-system, they should never have spoken about them at all. Such silence on such a subject would be most improbable under almost any circumstances: but it is quite incredible under the circumstances in which the Apostles were; because, then, no religion (whether Jewish or Pagan) had ever been so much as heard of, which had not Priests, [Sacrificers,] and Altars. It is plain that, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Apostle had to *meet a difficulty* felt by the Jewish converts; who were so attached to the Priests and Sacrifices of the Jewish Law, that they were unwilling to give them up. That difficulty he meets, not by showing them that the Christian religion *had* Priests and Sacrifices *on earth*,

but by explaining that Christ and his One Sacrifice in heaven had come *in the place* of the Jewish Priests and Sacrifices.

This, the absence of earthly Priests and Sacrifices (as well as Temples and Altars*), is also (you may observe) a proof that Christianity was *not* devised by Man. For, the thought of a religion without these would never have *naturally* occurred to any one at the time when the Gospel was first preached: and an impostor (even if it had occurred to him) would never have been so foolish as to make a religion without these, knowing (as he must have known) that others would be very unwilling to embrace such a religion: nor would he have *succeeded*—as the Apostles did—if he had.

And that Christians soon, *after the Apostles' times*, (though they did not, at first, believe in anything like *Transubstantiation*, or an atoning Sacrifice in the Eucharist,) began to talk of their clergy as *Priests* and *Levites*, shows how strongly men were bent towards such notions; and therefore makes the *silence* of the Apostles about any other *Priest* but Jesus Christ the more remarkable.

6. Once more, the teaching of Roman-catholics concerning what they call “the Sacrament of Penance,” is unscriptural and dangerous. According to them, the Priest has a power to forgive sins *as against God*,—not simply to *declare* God’s forgiveness of sins upon condition of man’s repentance and faith, but, in the strictest sense, to forgive or retain sins. This doctrine they ground upon our Lord’s words spoken to his Apostles:—“Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them: and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.”

But our Lord could not have meant that those words should be taken in their strictest literal sense, even as applied to the Apostles; because the power of absolutely giving or refusing

* When the Apostle says:—“We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle” (Heb. xiii. 10), all the best commentators agree that he means the benefit of *Christ’s sacrifice*; “Altar” being put, by a figure, for what is laid on an altar. Compare (1 Cor. x. 18), “Are not they which eat the sacrifices, *partakers of the Altar*?” The Apostle does not mean that Christ’s body was literally laid on, or brought to an Altar, but that it was as real a *Sacrifice* as if it were.

So, if one were boasting of the gold-mines of California, and I were to say,—“*We* have a better gold-mine in Manchester”—meaning the cotton-manufacture there—I should be understood to say (not that the cotton-manufacture was carried on in a cavern, or by washing in the bed of a river, but) that the manufacture of cotton yielded *more profit* than the gold-mines.

pardon to men, is a power which no mortal *man* could exercise without an express inspiration, enabling him to *read the heart* of each sinner in each particular case, and to chuse rightly according to that knowledge. Without such an inspiration, a mere man would often determine to pardon the *impenitent*, and *not* to pardon the penitent; and it would be impious to think that God would sanction *such* an exercise of power. "Shall not the Judge of all the world do right?"

Now, even the Apostles themselves had no such continual inspiration as this, enabling them to *judge* and *act* rightly, whenever men came to them professing to be Christians. Otherwise, they would not have permitted those "false brethren" to have been in the Church, whom nevertheless we find them complaining of. Nor did Peter (Acts viii. 13) discover Simon Magus, who had been baptized with the rest, to be still "in the gall of bitterness," and "without part or lot" in the Spirit, till his own wicked tongue betrayed him.

In some *special cases*, indeed, the Apostles seem to have been enabled to read men's hearts;—as when Peter detected the fraud of Ananias and Sapphira, and when Paul struck Elymas blind. But *then* there was no confession: and the Priests now requiring confession, is a proof that they have no such power. Confession of sins, however, even if it were *sincere*, could not make up for the want of insight on the Priest's part into men's minds; because the question is not so much *what* sins the penitent has actually committed, as it is, whether he is really turned *from* all sin, and *to* all righteousness. For, true repentance is not only resolving to give up some particular sins, and practise some particular duties; but (much more) to renounce all sin, and cultivate every kind of virtue. If a man's *disposition* be thus really changed, God will pardon him, *whatever sins* he may have committed; and if he be *not* thus changed, he cannot be reasonably promised forgiveness, however sorry he may be for the particular crimes he has been guilty of at any one time. Now, a Priest cannot tell the real inward dispositions of men (of which they cannot be *sure* themselves) and, therefore, cannot *give* pardon of sins to professed penitents.

And, as the Apostles themselves had not any constant power of reading men's hearts, so we never find them claiming for themselves the power of absolutely remitting men's sins.

They never say to any one, as Christ said, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." When James directs that, upon a man being afflicted with sickness, the Elders of the Church should come and anoint him with oil, he does not say that they should *absolve* him authoritatively; but that "they should pray over him," adding that "the *prayer* of faith should save (heal) the sick, and, if he had committed sins, they should be forgiven him." When he says, "Confess your sins [not to the Priest, but] one to another," he does not add, "and absolve one another," but, "and *pray* one for another."

On the other hand, the Apostles do constantly speak of having the power of *declaring* to men the conditions of pardon, and of *announcing* to those who were really penitent and believing, the forgiveness of sins. Paul says that to them "was committed the word of reconciliation:"—that they were to men, according as they received or rejected their message: "A savour of life," or "a savour of death." And they speak of the *application* of the promises of the Gospel by Baptism* to each individual as making over to the persons baptized the forgiveness of sins,—meaning merely forgiveness *on condition* of his real faith and repentance. But of conveying God's pardon in any other way than by *declaring* it to the penitent, or *sealing* it by the rite of baptism, they never say a word.

It is reasonable, therefore, to suppose that they understood our Lord to mean such a power, and such a power only, as they actually claimed and exercised: and if the Apostles had no ordinary power of "remitting sins," but by preaching the Word and administering the Sacraments, it is plain that no one else can have such a power. Nor is it uncommon in Scripture to speak of men as *doing* that which they *declare* as the Messengers of God. So God says to Jeremiah: "See, I have this day set thee over the nations, and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build and plant." (Jerem. i. 10.) Where the meaning plainly is that Jeremiah was inspired and authorized to *declare* what kingdoms should be established, and what destroyed.

In another view, men have a power of forgiving some sins;—

* Baptism is very frequently spoken of in Scripture as a remission of sins. Yet, according to the Church of Rome, not only priests, but laymen, and even women, may baptize. It is remarkable, too, that the Church of Rome does not, in any case, require a particular confession of sins previous to baptism.

namely, as offences *against themselves*. So our Saviour says: "If thy brother trespass *against thee*, forgive him." And any Society of men can forgive offences against that *Society*; and the Church can authorize its Ministers to forgive offences *against* the Church. Every Society has a power of making *regulations* and by-laws for its own good government; and any member of it who breaks these offends against the Society. They have, in that case, a power of excluding him from the Society, and, upon his submission, receiving him back again. Besides, in the Church, those who set a bad example by their ill lives, "offend" (cause to stumble in their Christian walk) the "weak brethren," and bring discredit on the Gospel. They should, therefore, be discountenanced, as far as possible; and, as long as they persist in their wickedness, Christians should show their disapprobation of them by avoiding their company. Nor should men be encouraged to pretend to be Christians by *coming* to the Lord's table, who show manifestly in their lives that they have no regard to Christ's laws. On the other hand, when such persons profess and appear to repent, we should "confirm our love towards them," and treat them as our brethren in Christ. But forgiving sins *as against men*, is not forgiving them *as against God*. If a man owes something to *you*, and also to your *neighbour*, you may forgive him your own debt, but not the other. Christ's *authorizing* Christians, then, thus to forgive or retain sins, would be, in fact, making Christians into the society we call a Church: and this our Lord may have intended to do when He said, "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted: and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained."

And, in this view — as respects offences against christian Communities — Paul speaks, (2 Cor. ii.) of the Church as *forgiving* a person who had *offended them* by his scandalous behaviour. The forgiveness, there spoken of, plainly consisted in the other members receiving him again to communion, and treating him again as a brother. But besides exclusion from the Church, the Apostle seems to have threatened him with some miraculous punishment, such as the Apostles sometimes inflicted, by the super-natural powers given to them, upon offenders. He had declared that *he* himself had, as *if he were present*, judged such an one; and desired the Corinthians, in execution of that judgment, when they were gathered together, "*with his spirit*," with

the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan, for the "*destruction of the flesh.*" (1 Cor. v. 3, 4.) Now, on hearing of his repentance, the Apostle remits that punishment, and says: "To whom ye forgive anything, I forgive it also."

Since the Apostles, therefore, speak of their having no power of remitting or retaining sins, but only, (1.) when they were enabled to read men's hearts, and punish criminals miraculously, or (2.) when they acted as officers of the Church towards offenders *against the Church*, or (3.) when they dispensed the Word and the sacraments, we may safely conclude that no other power besides these was committed to them by Christ, when he spoke the words we have been considering. And it is incredible that, if the Apostles believed that men's sins could not be forgiven, after baptism, unless they confessed them to a Priest and received absolution from him, they should never, in the New Testament, have pressed this duty upon their converts, or given directions either to the clergy or the people concerning it. They did not "hold back anything that was profitable," much less what was necessary, to their hearers, but kept themselves "pure from the blood of all," by not shunning to "declare unto them all the counsel of God." Yet, while they often make large promises of forgiveness to men on repentance, they never drop a hint of *this condition* of it.

Even supposing that a power of retaining and remitting the sins of individuals were given to the Apostles, and to the Priests as their successors, still this would not prove a private confession of each man's sins to the Priest to be necessary. Because, as we said before, the question is not, *what* sins the penitent has committed, but whether his repentance be *sincere*. Now, if the Priest explain to the penitent the conditions of the Gospel-covenant, and the true nature of repentance, and if the penitent professes, and seems to show such a repentance, then the Priest has all the information he *can* have, necessary for giving absolution. For the Priest's knowing the peculiar circumstances of a man's sins is of no avail, unless the man really repents of them; and this last (and only important) point he *can* only know in any case by the man's *profession* of repentance.

Here you may remark, by the way, how groundless is the pretence that the practice of confession gives a rational assurance

of pardon to Roman-catholics which Protestants cannot have. For (1.) the Priest's absolution can be of no value, unless the person himself be sincerely penitent; and of the sincerity of his repentance he can have no better evidence than a Protestant has or may have. For, if a Protestant doubt the state of his own mind, and thinks another unprejudiced person can form a better judgment of it, he may open his mind to a clergyman, or to some experienced adviser, and take their opinions on the subject. (2.) With respect to that very large number of sins, which, from dulness of conscience, we do not mark or remember, and therefore cannot *confess* particularly, the Roman-catholic can have no security with respect to these, but a *general* repentance in the sight of God, and praying to be "cleansed from his secret faults:" and this the Protestant has also. But, if it be said that the Priest's absolution covers these, *that* is allowing that the Priest might forgive *without* Confession. (3.) A Roman-catholic cannot be sure that he has "examined" himself with perfect diligence, so as to bring to mind all the sins he is *able* to remember. Now, if he have left out any sin through culpable negligence, that sin, being not confessed when it might have been confessed, is not forgiven by the Priest. (4.) Roman-catholics are only bound to confess *mortal* sins, not *venial*. Now, this is an acknowledgment that some sins may be pardoned without confession, or absolution by a Priest; and, therefore, that our Lord's giving Priests power to forgive sins generally, does not cut men off from obtaining forgiveness without absolution. But then, unfortunately, the Church has nowhere determined *what* sins are mortal and what venial, or the true distinction between the two kinds: and great differences amongst Confessors [Priests hearing confessions] are known to exist about this matter; some being more, and some less strict; some refusing to listen to the confession of sins, *as venial*, which others regard as *mortal*. Nor have the Priests themselves any infallible rule to guide them in judging about such things. The *security* here, therefore, is only the *discretion* of fallible men, who notoriously differ among themselves. If the Priest mistake, or fail in his duty, there is no ground of reliance, —except (what Protestants rely on) God's mercy. (5.) Confessors also differ as to what *sort* of repentance is sufficient for absolution; and the Church has nowhere exactly explained what it

means by that *attrition*, which is said to be the least amount of sorrow available. (6.) The Church of Rome requires, in order that an absolution should take effect, that the Priest should really *intend** in his own mind to absolve the penitent. Now, the penitent cannot certainly know what is passing in the Priest's mind, who may be, for aught he can tell, an Atheist, Jew, or Mahometan. Is not this wonderful *security* for the conscience of a reasonable man?

But though the practice of Confession gives no real security to Roman-catholics which Protestants may not have, it no doubt gives a false and fanciful security to those who can bring themselves to trust to the Priest entirely, and *put him in the place of God*. Most men find it much more easy to trust the Priest than to trust God, because we are naturally indisposed towards *Faith in things unseen*; that is, feeling and acting in respect of them as *realities*. We cannot *see* God, but we can *see* the Priest lift up his hand to give absolution; we can *hear* the Priest pronounce his absolution; and we can know exactly *what amount* of penance *he* requires from us; whereas, with respect to God, we can only know that He bids us, if we would please Him, strive to avoid *all sin*, and practise *all righteousness*. And men forget that all this is merely a certainty of what the Priest *says and does*,—not at all of what he *intends*; still less, of how *rightly* he says or does it, or how far God *ratifies* his acts and words.

The Scriptures frequently warn us against thus presuming to put the judgment of man in the place of God's judgment. "With me," says the Apostle Paul, "it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know [am conscious of] nothing by [against] myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore, judge nothing before the time, *until the Lord come*, who both will bring to light the

* Such an *intention* (at least of doing what the Church directs) is demanded by the Church of Rome from the performer of any Sacrament to make it valid. It would seem, therefore, that, since with them marriage is a Sacrament, of which the *parties* (not the Priest) are the performers, either party, by secretly withholding consent, may make the marriage invalid. This—a secret reservation of consent—was the chief ground on which Henry VIII. broke his marriage with Anne of Cleves. Some Roman-catholics try to explain away this doctrine of *intention*: but it is held in its greatest strictness by their best Divines: the Council of Trent certainly *seems* to affirm it: and no *authority* in that Church has ever ventured to condemn it. If any one is *sure* that it is not true, it must be *by private judgment*.

hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have [his] praise of God." (1 Cor. iv. 3, 4, 5.)

In effect, from putting the Priest in the place of God, men come to fancy that, what satisfies the Priest satisfies God also; and that they may be sure of God's forgiveness, when the Priest has pronounced their absolution: and, therefore, they think no more of their past sins after Confession, feeling as if the score were quite wiped out; and freely indulge themselves in whatever the Priest tells them is not wrong. Whereas the Priest, however diligent and honest, may mistake their state of mind; and the Priest they confess to may mistake the real nature of sins, which the Church has nowhere explained fully; and he may be quite dishonest and careless, or not quite honest and careful. Whereas those who feel that they have to do with an all-seeing and all-righteous Judge, will not be so likely to fall into these dangerous mistakes.

Another thing which recommends the practice of Confession to many persons is, feeling as if they had somehow *atoned for* their sins, by *confessing them*; and they speak of Confession as "making a clean breast:" which is just as if a man, whose hands were very dirty, should fancy he made them *clean* by *pulling off his gloves*. Yet men do feel as if the burden on their own minds was lightened by showing their foul and sinful thoughts to a Priest. Now the burden of *grief* may indeed be lightened by the sympathy of others: but the burden of *guilt* can be taken off our consciences only by God's forgiveness, on our resolution to amend our lives. Men forget, that, for bearing both burdens, they have a great High Priest in Heaven, Jesus, the Son of God, who "bore our griefs and carried our sorrows;" upon whom "the chastisement of our peace was laid, and by whose stripes we are healed;" who "can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way," having been Himself "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin."

Acknowledging our faults in the sight of God is, indeed, the *first step* towards amendment; and acknowledging the wrong we have done to men is, in respect of them, necessary to give them hopes that our minds are changed, and that we are not disposed to persist in our wrong-doing. But, in both cases, Confession is

only valuable as a *step towards* amendment ; nor are any sinners more hopelessly incorrigible than those “ who *own* their faults, but never *mend*.”

From what has been said, you will readily perceive that the Roman-catholic practice is not (as you might at first suppose) a mere *contrivance* of the Priests to get themselves power by finding out men’s secrets, but a thing *craved* for by the people, as an ease to their consciences. No doubt it does give the Priests a great and most dangerous power,—the shocking and notorious abuse of which is acknowledged by many Roman-catholics, and even by some Popes in their Bulls,—but that power could never have been gained if there had not been something in the practice *attractive* to people’s minds. Men would never have submitted to have their most secret thoughts—and those of their wives and daughters—wrung out of them by a Priest, if they did not feel that they gained a great deal more than they lost by such a humiliation. Men’s natural impatience to get rid of guilt without reformation, and men’s proneness to put Man’s judgment in the place of God’s, and substitute the seen for the unseen,—these are the true roots of the practice ; and the passages quoted from Scripture in its behalf are *excuses*, not *reasons* for it.

The Scripture says only in general, “ Confess your faults one to another ;” and leaves us, as in the case of other general precepts, to determine the occasions to which the rule applies. It implies, however, that there *are* such occasions. Now, we think, Confession is plainly proper—(1.) to your neighbour, of *wrong* done to him. For that is clearly needful to satisfy him of the reality of our repentance ; and nothing but pride can make us unwilling to own ourselves in the wrong, when we are so : (2.) to your child or friend, for their *instruction* ; when you would warn them, by your example, against such temptations as you have experienced ; or, (3.) for *advice* ; to a wise counsellor, to consult him whether you have done wrong, and what course to pursue ; or to let him know your peculiar weakness, in order that he may advise you how to guard against danger from it.

Feb. 1851.

No. IV.

"If we lions had been painters, the picture would have been different. You would have seen a lion conquering a man."—*Old Fable*.

SINCE we sent you Caution II., some Tracts which have been lately published and circulated by the Roman-catholic clergy in England have come into our hands; and it may be worth while to give you a sample of the sort of arguments which they are bringing forward in order to persuade men to join their Church. You might chance to meet some Roman-catholics who would tell you that, in that Second Caution, we had purposely chosen the weakest things said by them, and *kept back* what they thought the weightiest considerations in their favour. But when we bring before you the arguments which the very clever and shrewd persons, who are now trying to convert England, actually allege and thrust on people's notice, as the most likely to succeed, no one can pretend that we are seeking to deceive you, or hide the real strength of their cause from your view. They have undeniably some learned, and many able men amongst them; and such persons are not likely to make the worst of their own case.

One of these tracts proposes to show—1. How England became Christian; and, 2. How it became Protestant: and this it does by describing what sort of persons Pope Gregory, and the Monk Augustine, and King Ethelbert, who established the Roman-catholic Church in England, were; and what sort of persons King Henry VIII. and Archbishop Cranmer were; and then it puts the question—Which party do you chuse to follow?—Whose Christianity do you like best?

Now, what do you suppose the author of that tract would think of a Protestant writer who should give a most favourable account (as he might quite truly) of the Moravians, who converted the Esquimaux in Greenland, or the Independents, who converted the South Sea Islanders, and *thence* argue that the

belief of Protestants is correct, and that moreover all men are bound to become Moravians? Or, again, if a Protestant were to argue, that since (on his own showing) Henry VIII. was a greedy tyrant, and since he also opposed Luther, and burnt those who denied transubstantiation, *therefore*, Luther was right, and transubstantiation an error!

Or, again, many of the Popes (though not *above* thirty of them, perhaps, as a Roman-catholic gentleman observed the other day in the House of Commons) were worse men even than Henry VIII.; *therefore*, the doctrines which they opposed were true!

When Paul was at Rome (Philipp. i.), "Some preached Christ of envy and strife;" wherein *he* rejoiced. But some, perhaps, inferred the falsity of Christianity.

This writer tells you at large how many were led to support the Reformation for the sake of *plunder*, and to get the goods of the monasteries, and the Bishops' Sees. He forgets to say that Cardinal Wolsey, a good Roman-catholic, began the work, by the Pope's permission, in dissolving *forty* monasteries; and that all the world were then crying out at the scandalous way in which the Popes and Cardinals were, and had long been, plundering the Church: often to enrich their nephews, or mistresses, or bastard children!

But let Protestant plunderers be as bad as you please. How does this prove that the doctrines they opposed were true? Oh, of course, we know nothing *false* can be opposed by men acting on bad motives! Hence, the Mahometan religion must be true; since it is notorious that many of the Crusaders were animated by a desire of plunder!

Now, we are talking of the Abbeys; let us observe that, though this author talks of their *charity*—(i. e. alms distributed to beggars at the convent gate)—in such a style as to lead men to fancy, that Protestants had no charity at all, yet we will venture to say that Protestant England has given *voluntarily* much more to charitable and religious purposes than Roman-catholic England ever did. Get any good account of London alone, and see the number of hospitals, alms-houses, schools, and religious societies, which Protestants have endowed or maintain; and consider that the money given to them was not wrung from people, by remorse of conscience, to make satisfaction for enormous

sins, or to purchase eternal life; nor, for a great part of it, left on death-beds when the owners could no longer enjoy it, and when they were beset by priests urging them to leave their property to the Church: but that *all* was freely given, and much given by the owners in their lifetime; and you will be able to judge of this matter. We do not (God knows) give as much as we ought: but it is mere slander to say we give nothing. Yet, the other day, a writer in the *Edinburgh Review* thought it fair to give the whole credit of the exertions made to relieve the Irish people during the late famine there, to the Roman-catholic clergy; though it is notorious that the Protestant clergy exerted themselves to the utmost, and that many of them went without sufficient food themselves to supply the starving multitudes around them; that some lost their lives, and some their health, and some even their reason, from the great efforts they made in behalf of a people, the majority of whom are Roman-catholics. Yet that writer speaks as if he really did not know that there are any Protestant clergy in Ireland.

Indeed, so entirely does he take for granted, that no clergy but the Roman-catholic bestir themselves in Ireland to promote industry and good agriculture, that he gives high praise, on that account, to a Rev. Mr. Moriarty, supposing him to be a *Roman-catholic priest*; though the fact is, that the gentleman, thus unconsciously, but most deservedly praised, is a *Protestant* clergyman at *Dingle*, the pastor of a large and increasing body of converts from Romanism, and himself, too, a convert of very many years' standing. It is of *him* that the reviewer speaks as follows:—

“*The Roman-catholic Clergy.*—We have mentioned the Roman-catholic clergy. It is extremely gratifying to learn how actively and cordially they have supported the cause of agricultural improvement. The names of near a hundred Roman-catholic priests and curates occur in the reports of the ‘Practical Instructors,’ as having cheerfully and strenuously co-operated with them. Not a few are noticed specially as being forward themselves in the same sphere of usefulness. We read of a Rev. Mr. M’Garry, in the county of Donegal, who had thoroughly drained and subsoiled a large portion of his farm, to the perfect satisfaction of the ‘Instructor.’ We are told of a Rev. Mr.

O'Connell, of Kenmare, that he is 'a good farmer, and loses no opportunity of impressing upon his flock the obvious advantage of an alteration in their present mode of husbandry.' At Dingle, the 'Practical Instructor' accompanied the *Rev. Mr. Moriarty* over a large farm which he had lately got possession of in the worst order; 'but now, from the superior manner in which he has reclaimed it, it will prove not only profitable, but something more. It is his intention to make this a model farm, for an example in the locality.' Of the *Rev. Michael Conway*, parish priest of Bangor, in the county of Mayo, we are informed that 'his farm is conducted with judgment and skill, and, in speaking to the people, he can address them practically.' Here we see the ministers of religion in what the circumstances of the country have made their proper place, cheering the march of improvement, leading civilization by the hand. We could multiply the number of such instances."

But to return to these Roman-catholic Tracts. This writer goes on to tell us that the Duke of Northumberland, who had all along professed himself a Protestant, confessed, when he came to be executed, that he had been all along a Roman-catholic in his heart: and then he adds—"You will never find a single instance of a [Roman-] catholic thus confessing his dishonesty, and denying his faith, when about to suffer the most horrible of deaths."

Now, what *does* this mean?—Northumberland, by this man's own account, *was* all along a Roman-catholic. Yet here we have him *confessing his dishonesty* at the point of death. But if he means that no one ever *professed* to be a Roman-catholic, without really being so in his heart, that is what no one but a very ignorant person could believe, or a very foolish one could assert. It is very well known that, in Spain, Jews and Mahometans have lived as Roman-catholics, and even become Roman-catholic priests, retaining all the while their Jewish or Mahometan faith: and the number of pretended converts, who have been afterwards burned by the Inquisition, for *relapsing* into Judaism, is not small. *Multitudes* of priests, at the time of the first French Revolution, came forward to profess their infidelity, as soon as they had no interest in denying it: and it is pretty well-known that many others, including some Popes, have confessed this in private.

But were it otherwise, what do you say of the Hindoos, who drown themselves in the Ganges or lie down to be crushed under the car of Juggernaut? Have any of these ever confessed their dishonesty, or denied their faith? And did not Cranmer, when he came to undergo a horrible death, renounce his hypocritical submission to the Pope, and *die a Protestant*?

However it would be for our interest (if we had no regard to truth), to admit what this writer says. For surely it would be creditable to Protestants, if *none* of them were ever known to pretend, from temporal hopes or fears, to be Roman-catholics all their lives, and only own the truth when they came to die; and very discreditable to Roman-catholics, if they were *the only people* in the world ever guilty of such hypocrisy. We suspect the Roman-catholics, when they find what their champions are saying for them, will be apt to cry with Falstaff: "Call you that backing your friends? A plague on such backing, say I."

Well,—next we have a Tract to tell us how Queen Mary restored the Roman-catholic religion. We have not yet seen the second part of that Tract, which is to explain all about "Smithfield fires," and remove our vulgar Protestant prejudices against them. But we have a pretty good foretaste of what is to come, in the present part. For here, it is pretty plainly said that in a Roman-catholic country, and where *the people* desire it, it is the duty of a Prince to prevent the introduction of false doctrines by penalties—short of death. We hope Cardinal Wiseman will remember this: for, if this be true, he cannot very decently blame a Protestant Prince and people, if they should (as we trust they never will) prevent, by penalties, his introducing what the people consider false doctrine into England.

Then we are told that, up to the Reformation, there was but one faith, and one Church: for that, though strange doctrines were preached, they did not gain ground, being *put down* by the Government and the people at large. This is giving a very creditable account truly of the unity of his Church! So a Mahometan might say, We true believers have a glorious unity; for if any blasphemer open his mouth against the prophet, the zealous populace will hardly wait for the Cadi; but *impale* him on the spot.

Another Tract is upon the ancient Britons; and the argument of it amounts to this:—The ancient Britons—who were *extir-*

pated by *our* ancestors, the (Pagan) Saxons—received a religion which, *some say*, was that of the present Church of Rome: therefore, as we inhabit the *same island*, we ought to adopt their religion!—or else that of the Druids, for theirs was still more ancient.

Then there is another Tract to show that the Church of Rome preserved the Holy Scriptures very carefully, and *therefore* cannot teach anything contrary to them. For which argument, no doubt, the Chief Rabbi of the Jews in London will be much obliged to the author. Just so he will argue:—You Christians received the Old Testament from us. We preserved it with scrupulous care, counting even the letters, and writing it on most beautiful parchment. It is incredible, therefore, that we should teach anything contrary to it, since, if we did, we should have destroyed the book which would refute us!

The Jews *bear witness against themselves*, by preserving, at once, the Scriptures, whose divine authority they acknowledge, and also traditions contrary thereto,—as in the case of the fifth commandment, which, our Lord says they made void through their traditions. So does Rome hand down to us books which make no mention of adoration to the Virgin, of the supremacy of Rome, of sacrificing priests, &c., in places where we should have been sure to find them, if known in the apostolic times.

Towards the end of that Tract, the author tries (but cautiously) to prove that Roman-catholics never were remiss in translating the Scriptures into the vulgar tongue. The Catholic Church, he says, translated the Bible into many vulgar languages, and *most of those* translations were made before the glorious Reformation. “Now, mark how a plain tale shall put him down.” *Most of the translations*, not made by Protestants, were made in *early times*, before the error of thinking that the laity might be left in ignorance of the Scripture began to prevail. Many of them were indeed made by persons *not* dependent on the Church of Rome at all, as the Syriac; some, by persons whom he would himself call heretics, as the Gothic. But true it is that the Church of Rome did, in early times, translate the Scriptures into Latin, because that was then the vulgar [common] language; and hence that version is still called the “Vulgate.” Yet that Church so completely *changed* afterwards from its former principles, that it is notorious that *one of the*

chief contests at the time of the Reformation, was whether it was *needful* that the Scriptures should be translated into living languages—a contest which could not have arisen if the Scriptures *had been* translated by the Church of Rome itself into languages then living, and commonly understood. For many years after the old translations had ceased to be intelligible, the Church of Rome neither made new ones, nor suffered those made by others (as Wicliffe, the Waldenses, &c.) to be read by the people; but, *after the Reformation*, finding that the people *would have* the Scriptures, it was driven to make some versions of them, lest they should read those made by Protestants.*

Indeed, the translators of the English Roman-catholic version of the New Testament say expressly in their preface, that their attempt might seem *hardly tolerable*, if it were not that the Protestant version made it necessary to put something in its place. All England (not to speak of other places) was left, for centuries *before the Reformation*, without any authorized translations of the Bible into a language understood by, and accessible to, the people. Indeed, when he tells us that some of the translations he speaks of were made in the very "*earliest times*," that is enough to show us they could have been of little use in *modern times*. The English in Richard the Third's time must have been greatly edified by Bede's Anglo-Saxon Gospel!

We have next a Tract to tell us (*on the word of Romanists*) how much good the Jesuits did among the Indians in Paraguay, and what pious and enlightened Christians they made those Indians; but he omits to mention that, as soon as those Indian converts, who had been kept in leading-strings, and not taught to *study Scripture*, and exercise their own judgments, were *left to themselves*, they at once *fell back* into barbarism and paganism.

The argument of the Tract is nearly this:—The Jesuits were very zealous, self-denying missionaries, and treated the Indians very kindly: *therefore*, their religion is true. So a Quaker might draw a fine picture (finer than this in some things, though with more of *drab* in the colours) of the behaviour of his sect to

* We do not deny that, in the middle ages, some vernacular versions of Scripture were made by private individuals for private use; but they were not sanctioned, circulated commonly, nor freely read. If the Church of Rome *then* had really desired that the common people should understand the Scriptures, she would have had them *read to them* in a language which they understood; as the *ancient Church of Rome* did.

the Indians in Pennsylvania, and thence argue that *Quakerism* is the only pure form of Christianity.

But you will ask us, perhaps—How came the Indians in Paraguay to be *left to themselves*? We will tell you. All the Roman-catholic Princes in Europe became alarmed at the intrigues of the Jesuits, and it was commonly thought that they had formed the design of getting still greater temporal power into their own hands than the Popes ever had, even in the days when they deposed emperors. Hence, when the [Roman-catholic] kings of Spain and Portugal saw them making themselves absolute princes (as they were) of Paraguay, raising armies there, and suffering no strangers to enter it, they thought it best to turn them out of it, which they were forced to use military measures to effect.

All this the writer omits to tell; and when he speaks so pathetically of the rapine and slaughter committed by the Spaniards in conquering South America, he forgets to say that they were sent there by the Pope, who graciously *gave away* Peru to them, as if he were the Lord of the earth.

This author speaks also very pathetically of the persecutions of Roman-catholic missionaries and converts in China; though, as we have just seen, he holds it to be the duty of a prince, where his subjects are all of one faith, to prevent the introduction of *false* doctrines amongst them; which the Emperor of China, no doubt, thinks the Romish doctrines to be.

In reality, the persecutions of the Roman-catholic missionaries in China and Japan seem to have been chiefly caused by well-grounded suspicions of *ambitious* designs. And, if those people knew that the men who came to make converts among them thought that, as soon as they were strong enough, they ought to *put down* all paganism, you cannot wonder that they should have wished to be beforehand with the missionaries.

If a Christian missionary, who holds such principles as are here maintained, honestly avows them to a Mahometan or Pagan prince—saying, “It is your duty to suppress, by the sword, all religions except the true one, and mine is the true;” the former of these statements is so much more acceptable to human nature than the other, and so much more likely to be the *first* admitted, that the reply could hardly fail to be, “I agree with you, except that I hold *mine* to be the true religion;” and the probable

result would be immediate sentence of death, or banishment, to the missionary and all his followers.

Or suppose the missionary studiously to *conceal*, at first, this point of duty from the magistrate, and that a Pagan prince discovered that the Church of Rome enjoined on all persons in any authority in the Church (as it is enjoined in the Creed of Pope Pius IV.) to "take care, by all means in their power, that all their subjects, and all who came within their cure in the exercise of their office, should hold and profess" the Roman-catholic faith; and that, accordingly, the Pope and his Bishops had constantly, where they had the power, driven away, *by force*, all teachers of contrary doctrines, and had often encouraged and exhorted Christian princes to scourge, imprison, banish, or burn those whom they called heretics or misbelievers;—would he not naturally think these men all the more dangerous from *concealing* such things from him, and regard them as no better than an assassin, who hides the murderous knife in his sleeve, till the moment when he can plunge it into the heart of his unwary companion?

It may perhaps be replied, that the first Christian preachers (and, in some degree, this holds good with their successors) did knowingly bring persecution on themselves, by preaching a gospel unacceptable both to Jews and Gentiles. But they did this because they had received a *distinct revelation of certain truths*, together with an express command to declare those truths "to every creature," and to "make disciples of all nations." And if we find an express injunction in the New Testament (but not otherwise) to inculcate and practise, as a duty, the employment of secular force in the cause of our religion, we must, it is true, comply with that injunction, *openly and unreservedly*, and abide the consequences. But there is no such injunction there, but rather the contrary in almost every page. If, therefore, Christian professors resolve thus to "tempt the Lord," by "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," and claiming the divine sanction for conduct which the Scriptures not only do not enjoin, but forbid, they are not God's martyrs, should the result be that "they who *draw* the sword perish by the sword."

This last passage (John xviii. 11) cannot, of course, mean literally that *all* will perish by the sword who employ violence. Does it not mean, "if you confine yourselves to argument and

persuasion, and good example, *I* will protect the cause, and sooner or later, advance it in opposition to secular power,”—(as was done in the early spread of Christianity,)—“but if you resort to force, you must *take the chances of war*: the stronger, in military force, will succeed against the weaker: you will be *liable* to perish by the sword, if more and more powerful swords are drawn against you. You will throw away the weapon which gives *you* the advantage, and take that which gives truth none.”

And even thus has it often fared with Roman-catholic and other Christian missionaries, who have called in the aid of the “arm of flesh.”

We find, on looking back, that we have omitted one thing worth remarking on.

One of these Tracts contains a parable about a set of travellers, some of whom thought their *guides* were leading them wrong, and resolved to consult the *map* for themselves, and be directed by that. But though all took the same map for direction, they could not agree as to its meaning, but separated, each thinking himself right, on different routes. Whereupon the rest congratulated one another on having stuck to their guides.

In this parable, of course, the *guides* are the Romish priests; the *map* is the Bible; and the men who trust to it are the Protestants.

But, in applying this parable, everything depends on the *reasons* the travellers might have had for distrusting their guides. If these were good reasons, the rest might have had small cause to congratulate themselves. All they could say was, that they kept together, and if they fell into mischief, would *all* fall into it. But if keeping together was all their aim, they might attain *that* quite as well by following any one of the others, as by sticking to their guides. Suppose that *all* the others went *wrong*,—that would not prove the guides right.

Nor did the mistakes of those who preferred the map to the guides, prove that the map was not a sufficient direction. If they were—as this writer tells us—silly and obstinate men, the fault might be in themselves; and the map might be a very good map notwithstanding, and sufficient to guide those who were *not* silly and obstinate, and much more fit to be relied on than the guides. Their differences only proved that most of

them did not understand it; but *why* they did not, is another question, which if we saw the map, we might be able to answer.

But now, what do you think of *our* parable?

A party of travellers to a great city had a map of the way, but distrusting it, resolved to take a guide. The road was confessedly difficult and intricate. Several guides offered themselves, who modestly said that they had taken great pains to understand the matter thoroughly, and would do their best to bring them thither safely; offering to show them by the map as they went along how the road lay. But these were all thrust aside by one swaggering fellow, who declared that he was an *infallible guide*, and could not possibly mistake the path by day or night. The travellers took him at his word, and "congratulated each other" on getting a man whom they could trust entirely. But after awhile, some of them thought that the road along which he led them had a very suspicious appearance; and on looking at the map, they found that they were on ground which was there laid down as *dangerous*. Thereupon they ventured to remonstrate, but the guide immediately knocked them down; and turning to the rest, assured them that the things marked on the map as mountains were rivers, and the rocks marshes, and the marshes firm ground, &c.; in short that they could not understand the map:—and, so saying, he put the map in his pocket, and bade them trust to him to guide them according to its *true meaning*. They did so, and "both fell into the ditch."

True it is that differences among Protestants are the great boast and great strength of the Church of Rome. And just so, contests between Whigs and Tories are matter of scornful exultation, no doubt, to the Russian Autocrat. *He* has no members of Parliament making speeches against each other; all being under *one* despotic monarchy. And true it is that in *all* questions, religious or political, where there is a right and a wrong, several different parties cannot be *all* right. When all are forced into agreement or outward submission, what they submit to *may* conceivably be right.

But suppose it is not? Then *all* are in the wrong; and truth and right have no chance at all, to the end of time.

When Buonaparte was, with his attendants, overtaken in Egypt by the tide of the Red Sea, out of sight of the shore, the

whole party were in danger of being drowned ; and, if he had given orders to proceed in some *one* direction, *if* that had chanced not to be the right, *all* must have perished. He told them each to ride in the direction he judged best ; and if the water was found to deepen, to turn back ; if to grow shallower, to shout to his comrades. Thus the one who hit on the right course saved both himself and the rest. But if some of the rest had been (as in religion, politics, and other matters) too perverse to follow the *proved* right course, at least *some* would have been saved.

Still there can be no doubt that our divisions are a great stumbling-block in the way of Roman-catholics ; and it is much to be lamented that some Protestants seem inclined to help forward the Pope's cause by taking occasion from present circumstances to fall on each other, even when (like the Jews in the last siege of their city) they are assailed by a common enemy. We have seen, for example, lately, a tract by an Arian minister (Dr. H. Montgomery, of Belfast), in which he takes advantage of the present excitement against papal aggressions to make an attack upon the established Church of England and Ireland. Now no one can blame an Arian for preaching against the doctrines and system of our Church, if he will ; but is *this* the time, or *such* the proper *way* of assailing it ? It is curious, too, to observe how much he treads (as it were) in the very steps of the Roman-catholic Tract-writer, enlarging on just the same vulgar common-places about Henry VIII. and Queen Elizabeth. He tells us that the Thirty-nine Articles are an admixture of *Romanism* and German Protestantism ; *meaning*, we suppose, by "Romanism," the doctrines of the Trinity, Atonement, &c. Then he says that the "two principal creeds of our church" "are entirely Romish" and our Liturgy chiefly so ! Now the two principal creeds of our Church are the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed. A man who thinks these "entirely Romish" may well think the Liturgy chiefly so. He adds, as a matter of praise, that some "trifling modifications" were made in our Liturgy, under Charles I., by Archbishop Laud :—the *fact* being that, though Laud introduced or sanctioned some idle *ceremonies*, no modification in the Liturgy whatever was made in the reign of Charles I. Then he says that, since that time, no change at all has been made ; the *fact* being that several changes were made

under Charles II. Finally, he declares himself *rejoiced* to find that many of our clergy, and the great body of our laity, differ greatly from that Prayer-book, to which *all the clergy subscribe, and which all the Laity use*. And is this fit matter of rejoicing to a Christian man?

And now, before we conclude, let us return for a few moments to the subject which we brought before you in the first Caution.

The writer of the Roman-catholic tracts which we have noticed was permitted by our free and equal laws to do his best; and he has done it. What that best is, you have seen. He has tried to persuade people (contrary to fact and reason,) that their ancestors were Roman-catholics, and that, *therefore*, they ought to be the same; that all Roman-catholic rulers have been very good, and all Protestant rulers bad; and that Roman-catholics have always been zealous in reclaiming the heathen, and feeding beggars, &c.; and that, therefore, we ought all to become Roman-catholics forthwith. These, and such as these, are his arguments; and we have met him by well-known facts, and plain reasons, without bitter railing or passionate declamations, and without going into any matters not level to ordinary understandings, and have shown good grounds for all reasonable men to reject all that he has attempted to establish.

But what if it had been *penal* to say anything against the established Protestant opinions?

In that case, he could easily have *insinuated* all that he has now openly alleged; and, even if he had been liable to prosecution for any part of it, the tracts would have been all the more carefully circulated; just as is the case now in Italy, with a tract against confession, by a (late) Roman-catholic priest, which no one dares openly to sell or buy, but which *is read all over the country*.

But, in that case, he might have *hinted* how much *more* he *could* have said, had he been allowed to speak out, &c.; though, in fact, he might, in a covert way, have said all he has to say. *And so also with infidels*. Unless you can keep the people in *total* darkness, it is the wisest way for the advocates of truth to give them *full* light.

Hence you may see that any sort of *legislative* protection against "papal aggressions," planned for encouraging Protestantism, and placing Roman-catholics under difficulties, tends (as was said in No. I.) to disparage the Protestant cause, both

by implying that, if both sides are allowed fair play, the Roman-catholics must prevail, and also by raising a suspicion that more *might* be said in their favour if they were allowed freedom of speech. We have refuted all that this writer *has* said; but it would be impossible to refute suspicions of what he *could* have said, supposing he had not been left free.

Do not, however, for a moment suppose that it is on grounds of mere *expediency* that we oppose persecution and everything partaking of that character. We do, indeed, hold it to be utterly inexpedient, for the cause of Truth, (whatever it may be for the cause of error,) to resort to any coercive measures,—any legal penalties or civil disabilities, designed either to force men to profess a true Faith, or to give a political “ascendancy” to those who do so. We are convinced that this is depriving Truth of its natural and proper advantage by exchanging the decision of Reason, in which Truth has a superiority of strength, for the decision of force, which may as easily be on the wrong side as on the right.

But we bring forward this argument, only to convince those who have not as yet learned to perceive the *unchristian* character of all kinds and forms of persecution, and as a consolatory confirmation for those who do perceive this. Any kind of forcible means employed in the cause of true Christianity, or what is supposed to be such, is contrary, we are convinced, to the spirit of the Gospel, and goes to make Christ’s such a kingdom of this world as He expressly disclaimed.

And we dwell the more earnestly on this point, because we consider that the whole question of the truth of Christianity is at issue on it. For, it is plain that Jesus Christ and his Apostles utterly disclaimed all design to force men into a profession of their Faith, or to establish for their followers a monopoly of any civil rights or privileges.* And it is no less plain that if they really had such a design, which they meant to be carried out hereafter, when they should have gained greater strength—if, in short, they were insincere in their disavowal of it, they must have been base deceivers and impostors.†

But there are still, we fear, some persons who are so far

* “To put down false creeds,” says Chrysostom, “by external power, is not permitted to the Christians; by persuasion, by conviction, and by love, alone, may they work towards the salvation of mankind.”—See “Life of Chrysostom” translated from Neander, by the Rev. J. C. Stapleton, vol. i. p. 50.

† See Essay iii. on the Dangers to the Christian Faith, §§ 6, 7.

from clearly perceiving this, that it is only when persecution is employed against themselves, or against those who think with them, that they really disapprove of it, or even call it by its own right name. For instance, in a work published but a few years ago, and which obtained considerable circulation, we find it declared that "The magistrate who restrains and coerces or punishes those that go into a Pagan country and there attack the existing religion, opposes himself to God, and is a persecutor : but the magistrate who *restrains, coerces, or punishes* those that assault the faith of our Christian population,—this magistrate *obeys the command of God, and is not a persecutor.*"

Now, this doctrine, you observe, makes the whole guilt, and indeed the whole character of persecution, turn on the correct or erroneous religious belief of the parties. And as each magistrate will of course maintain that his is the true faith, and that which he opposes the false, the principle laid down would be readily assented to, and adopted and acted on by *every persecutor throughout the world*. The government, for instance, of Florence, whose treatment of some unfortunate victims lately excited so much commiseration and indignation in England, might be fully agreed, as to the general principle, with some of those who the most loudly cried out against them as persecutors. "On your own principle," they might say, "*we obey the command of God, and are not persecutors* ; since those whom we punish are opposed to the true faith: you indeed say that it is *not* the true faith ; but we think otherwise: and as you claim a right to decide this point yourselves as you judge best, so do we."

We are quite sure, indeed, that many good men who attended public meetings to petition for legislative protection against the Pope, without specifying *what* protection would please them, would be sorry to see penal laws brought in; but they ought to have considered what such a movement as they joined in must end in. It must end, we think, *either* in what is vulgarly called "a bottle of smoke," *or* in some strong penal enactment.

Let them calmly reflect that there *are* but two ways of opposing the spread of an influence derived from *opinions*. (1.) One is the way of force; and that is only effectual, when followed *thoroughly*, by banishing or putting to death all who oppose the established religion, as was done with the Moors and Jews of

Spain. Less than this will only irritate and provoke, and call up fresh zeal and activity in the party whom you seek to crush, making them, at the same time, objects of pity, and even affection, to generous-hearted persons among yourselves. (2.) The other is to oppose both religious error and infidelity, by learning and teaching the truth; by sound *reasons*; which are the *only* weapons peculiar to truth, and the only ones which give truth an *advantage*.

Of this, at any rate, be sure, that nothing the Pope himself could do, could do us so much damage as the selfish, short-sighted, unjust, and base procedure of legislating for what is (wrongly) called the Church of England, omitting Ireland. The Act of Union between the two kingdoms made the two churches to become one—the United Church of England and Ireland; and legislating for part of that Church, on different principles from the rest, is to set at nought your own laws, and teach *all others*, by your example, to despise them. Let your legislation be at least consistent with itself. Inconsistency in these things is not a mere *logical flaw*, but a practical one; and there is no more certain source of weakness in a State than a manifest inconsistency between the principles of the Constitution, and the way in which the Government is worked. You have gone on too long already making laws for that Country which you could not, or would not, enforce; professing principles which you could not, or would not, apply; and then wondering that the Irish People will not respect the law which yourselves have taught them to laugh at and disobey. Ireland may at present be an anomaly; but, if things do not mend, it will cease to be so in a way most disastrous to you. Its example will eat like a canker. It is time that you should make your option—either repeal the Act of Union, or deal with Ireland on the principles of the Act of Union.

Besides, there can be no reason, but *Fear*, for taking different measures in Ireland from those you take in England against the Pope; and, therefore, such measures will at once *provoke* and *encourage* Roman-catholics, by showing that you are ready to trample on them where they are weak, and concede to them where they are strong. The *Irish* Roman-catholics will owe you no thanks. They will feel that you would scourge *them* too, if you dared; and they will become, consequently, all the more

arrogant and encroaching. The *English* Roman-catholics will be stung with a sense of injustice, and feel that they can only gain (what they will think) their rights, by gaining more political power; and you will thus draw the cords tighter which bind them to their brethren on the other side of the Channel; so that, instead of strengthening English influence, you will really strengthen Irish influence. You will make Ireland—where it may be done in safety—the *centre* of all Roman-catholic movements in the Queen's dominions, and the Irish priests the directors of such movements.

And, while you are bringing yourselves into all these difficulties, for the sake of stringent measures in England, you will really be doing *nothing at all* to prevent the real danger. For no political measures (short of the direst persecution) can prevent the spreading of Romish doctrine; and, if that leaven once leavens a large mass in England, your stringent measures will not be worth the parchment they are written on. They will be as utterly powerless in England, and for the same reason, as they have been before now in Ireland. The *great* danger, then, is of Romish doctrine; and what makes that so dangerous is, that it is the natural fruit of our own corrupt hearts: as we hope soon to show you in the next Caution.

March 7, 1851.

No. V.—Part I.

“ Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples : and they are written for our admonition.”—1 Cor. x. 11.

SOME of you may, perhaps, be disposed to say of what we have lately been addressing to you—“ This may be useful for others ; but *I* am not likely to come in the way of Roman-catholic priests, and therefore I need not trouble myself about the errors of the Church of Rome.”

Now this would be reasonable enough, if those errors were *introduced* and *caused* by that Church ; but, in truth, they have a much deeper origin. They spring of themselves out of the soil of *human nature* ; and all who partake of human nature, carry in their own bosoms the seeds which may *grow* into the errors of the Church of Rome, or something essentially the same.

It is a great mistake to suppose (as some persons seem to suppose) that all the errors of the Church of Rome are doctrines invented by their priests and learned men, and by them imposed upon the people. On the contrary, many of those errors first arose among the people, and spread very widely among *them*, before the learned men took them up, and endeavoured to give them as rational and consistent a shape as they could. And, in some cases, the clergy appear to have, even reluctantly at first, put themselves at the head of popular movements, under the fear of losing their influence entirely, if they strove to check them. Hence (as has been truly said) it is a sad thing in the Church of Rome that, while the laity think they cannot but be very safe in following the unanimous opinion of such numbers of very learned men, those learned men are not, in truth, at liberty to have any *opinion* at all, but are obliged to employ all their learning merely in defending what the most *ignorant* men in former ages have determined for them beforehand.

Nor is it into the Church of Rome *only* that such errors have

made their way; but many of the same wrong doctrines and practices as we commonly call *Romish* are found prevailing also in the Greek Church, which was always independent of Rome, and generally hostile to it.

Here, then, is a plain proof that men may be in danger of falling into what are called Romish errors, without listening to Romish priests, or having any disposition to submit to the Pope. The Greek Christians are as little apt as we can be to listen to Romish priests; and they resist, and always have resisted, all attempts of the Pope to establish his authority over them. They are just as resolute against *Papal aggressions* as we are, and have constantly opposed them with great vigour and perseverance; so that, even the other day, when the present Pope wrote to them, claiming their allegiance, the Greek bishops answered that *he* was in Schism, and should return to the communion of the one Holy Catholic Church (meaning their own), before they could hold any friendly intercourse with him.

Yet most of the same corruptions as are found in the Romish Church are found in the Greek also; and, for the most part, even in the very same forms in both. For, the evil tendencies which are rooted (not in the characters of particular persons, but) in human nature generally, will, under similar circumstances, manifest themselves, at all times and in all places, in the same way.

The system of the Church of Rome is not like the false religion of Mahomet, who set up a pretension to a divine mission, and founded a new religion ready made, in a very short time, on the credit of his own fancied or feigned revelations. The peculiar doctrines of his sect (though very much accommodated to the prevailing notions) *proceeded from the system* of imposture and delusion which he began. With the Romish system, it was the reverse. The peculiar corruptions of doctrine and worship of that, flowed—and flowed gradually—from the faults and follies of man's heart; and *thence* originated the *system* of that Church.

Mahomet's religion was like a tree, with its full-grown trunk and spreading branches, planted in a soil that suits it. But the Romish system rose insensibly, like a young plant from the seed, making a progress scarcely perceptible from year to year, till at length it had fixed its root deeply in the earth and spread its baneful shade all around.

No one, accordingly, can point out the precise time when this system of corruptions *first began*, or name any person who *introduced* it; any more than we can tell when many of the *heathen* corruptions first began, or who introduced them. We know, however, that the Church of Rome was a *pure* church in the time of the Apostles, and we see it now to be *corrupt*. Now it is plain that there could be nothing wrong in belonging to the Church of Rome while it remained pure, or if it should reform itself. And, on the other hand, there can be no good in keeping clear of the Church of Rome, if you fall into like errors. Hence the true way is, to take things at the source.

Keep clear of *Mahomet*, and you will be safe from the peculiar errors of his religion.

Keep clear of the *errors* of Romanism, and you will be safe from the *Church* of Rome.

Now, if we look closely at the errors of Romanism, we shall find that they spring (as we have said) from dispositions to which we are all naturally more or less prone; which may be seen working, to some extent, amongst Protestants, as well as amongst Roman-catholics; and which, if left to work unchecked, might in the end corrupt any Protestant Church as completely and hopelessly as they corrupted the once pure Church of Rome. It is from these that our great danger arises; and the principal advantage which Romanists have in striving to convert us to their system, lies not in the plausible arguments they can bring, but in this—that we have a traitor in our own hearts—a disposition to like and chuse such a system as they set before us.

1. Look, for example, at the *superstitions* of the Church of Rome, and you will see that they have really sprung from a proneness to superstition, natural to Man. The invocation of saints, and adoration of images and relics, which they practise, are only the shapes taken, in their religion, by the same superstitious temper which leads heathen nations to invoke what they call gods—*i. e.* powerful but imperfect Beings—rather than the Creator, and to set up idols as objects of adoration. The superstitious worship practised by Roman-catholics is just Christianity *accommodated* to that evil disposition.

Yet many persons are so far from being alive to the impiety and mischief of superstition, that they look on it as hardly a fault at all; or, at most, as what is called a *fault on the right side*. They may smile at, or pity superstitious people, as putting

themselves to *unnecessary* trouble, as being *over* scrupulous, or "religious over much;" but, they are so far from thinking them, therefore, in any danger, that they rather regard them as all the more safe, by doing something *more* than their neighbours; just as ignorant folk sometimes recommend a patient to "make all sure," by *adding* the nostrum of a quack to the dose prescribed by a regular physician.

Too *religious*, in the proper sense of the word, we cannot be. We cannot have the religious sentiments and principles too strong, or too deeply fixed, if only they have a right object. We cannot *love* God too warmly—or *honour* Him too highly—or strive to *serve* Him too earnestly—or *trust* Him too implicitly; because our duty is "to love Him with *all* our heart, and *all* our soul, and *all* our mind, and *all* our strength."

But *too religious*, in another sense, we may, and are very apt to be;—that is, we are very apt to make for ourselves too many *objects* of religious feeling. We will endeavour to make what we mean clear to you in as few words as we can.

Almost all men are forced to feel and acknowledge that we ourselves, and the whole world we see about us, depend on some super-human cause or power which has a control over us, and from which our happiness or misery comes. Now, the notions men form of such super-human powers, the feelings they entertain towards them, and the course of behaviour springing from such notions and feelings,—these are what we call religion; the super-human powers (real or imaginary) being called the *objects* of religion. You will readily perceive, then, that men's religions will be different, according as the *objects* of their religion are different. If a man worships a Being whom he thinks *good*, but not all-knowing, he will often be satisfied with trying to *appear* good, without becoming so. If he worships one whom he thinks *spiteful*, he will try to appease his malice by doing injury and inflicting pain on himself and others. If he worships one whom he does not think *all*-powerful, he will be apt sometimes to neglect *his* service for that of some other power, if there seem to be a chance of gaining anything by the change. If a man thinks his deity *vain*, he will try to flatter him; if weakly *compassionate*, to move his pity by doleful lamentations and complaints. In short, as the behaviour of a family will be influenced by the character of the master of the house, so the

religion of men will be influenced by the character which they suppose to be that of the Being whom they worship.

Now, Almighty God has revealed Himself as the proper object of religion—as the one only Power on whom we are to feel ourselves continually dependent for all things, and the one only Being whose favour we are continually to seek; and, lest we should complain that an Infinite Being is an object too remote and incomprehensible for our minds to dwell upon, He has manifested Himself in his Son, the man Jesus Christ, whose history and character are largely described to us in the gospels; so that, to love, fear, honour, and serve Jesus Christ, is to love, fear, honour, and serve Almighty God; Jesus Christ being “one with the Father,” and “all the fulness of the Godhead” dwelling in Him.

But as long as our characters are not *like* God’s, and we are unwilling to have them *made* like his, we are naturally averse to being brought thus into immediate contact with Him; and we shrink from holding (as it were) direct converse, or “walking with” God,—from making Him the object towards which our thoughts and affections directly turn, and the person to whom we come straight in our prayers, and in whose control and presence we feel ourselves at all times. Hence, men wish to put between themselves and God some other less perfect Beings, with whom they can be more familiar, and who (they hope) will “let them off” more easily, when they sin, than He would.

Now, indulging this disposition is not merely *adding* to true religion, but destroying, or going near to destroy it. For, when we have once made for ourselves such objects of religious feelings, they are objects so much more suited to our corrupt nature than God is, that we soon begin to let Him drop out of our minds entirely, whilst the inferior Powers engross all our serious worship. Thus the heathens, who began with adding the worship of other deities to that of the Supreme, ended with ceasing to worship the Supreme at all. Nor does it make so much difference, as you might at first suppose, whether we think of such inferior Beings as lords, having a direct control over us (as the Pagans commonly did), or as only *influencing* the Supreme through their favour with Him; as the Greeks and Roman-catholics commonly profess to think of the glorified saints. Because, he, from whom I expect happiness or misery, becomes

the uppermost object in my mind, whether he *give* or only *procure* it. If an agent has such influence with the landlord, that the agent's friends are sure of favour, and his foes are sure of hard treatment, it is the agent, and not the landlord, that the tenants will think most about; though all his power comes really from the landlord. Hence you see the danger of this kind of superstition, by which the heart which should be God's is *forestalled*, as it were, by other objects.

Thus, in the practice of invoking saints, men (1) give way to that wrong disposition of our corrupt nature which makes us shrink from direct communion with God, and strive, like Adam, to "hide ourselves" from his presence; and (2) they bring in their own *fancy* into religion; *imagining*, without proof, that the saints and angels can hear and help them. Now *fancy*, when once brought in, knows not where to stop. It is like one of those fiends in old stories, which any one could *raise*, but which, when raised, could never be kept within the magic circle. Accordingly, as soon as ever men *began* fancying objects of worship to themselves, they went on without check, multiplying their numbers, and inventing stories about them without limit. So it was with the heathens and their gods: and so the Greek and Latin churches have, in like manner, given way to men's fancies in describing the ranks and Orders, and names of angels, and the past adventures, and present dignity of saints. Legends about these are constantly read by their monks and priests in their daily Offices of devotion, though learned persons among themselves allow them to be mere romances. Yet those learned persons are still bound to read those romances as part of their daily devotions; and, we must suppose, do so.

But men are not satisfied with imagining for themselves *unseen* objects of worship. They wish to *see* their gods. We all find it more or less difficult to "walk by faith," [act on the belief of things unseen, as of realities] not "by sight."

Hence the heathens set up, first, rude stones and then statues or pictures of their gods, to which they might show *outward acts* of reverence in honour of their deities; just as soldiers salute the royal standard in honour of the Queen, whose arms it bears. But, from showing such outward respect, they soon came to fancy that their deities were, in some mysterious way, connected with those images, and that the power of their gods was *in* the

images, so that the images were, to all intents and purposes, the gods themselves. Accordingly we find that God expressly forbade the Jews to make any image of Him, or to bow down to, or worship the likeness of, anything whatever. And experience shows (as you will find largely proved in the Homily against Peril of Idolatry, especially Part III.) that, wherever images are set up in places of worship, they generally become enticements to rank idolatry, "preaching," as the Homily says, idolatry often more effectually by their very presence, than the minister can preach against it by his tongue. Yet Christians, thinking themselves safe, because they had renounced *heathen* idolatry, began themselves to set up images and pictures, to *help* them, as they said, in their devotion by keeping the thoughts of what those images and pictures represented, before their minds;—then they began to show outward marks of reverence to the pictures and images;* and then (like the heathens) to fancy that those pictures and images were possessed of supernatural powers, and to feel towards them, as if Christ and the saints *dwelt* in them.

There is certainly nothing wrong of itself in using a picture or image, to put us in mind of heavenly things, of which they are the signs; but there is great danger of our being led to feel towards the sign as if it were the thing signified; and that danger will appear the greater, if you consider some other instances in which it has been incurred.

Our Saviour, you know, in condescension to our weakness, was pleased to appoint two outward rites as signs of spiritual graces [favours] bestowed on us—baptism, or washing with *water*, as a sign of our being cleansed from sin; and partaking of *bread* and *wine*, as the sign of our enjoying the benefits of the sacrifice which He made in giving his body and blood for us.

One might think, at first, that such signs as these were safe enough from idolatry—that no one could be so stupid as to fancy that there was any spiritual power in mere drops of water, out of a common well or river; or so besotted as to worship the bread which had been made by a baker, and which the worshipper was about to eat. Yet so strong is man's tendency to superstition, that even these simple signs could not escape being perverted by it! Men first (in spite of our Lord's

* As ordered, under Anathema, in the Council of Trent.

warning that "the Spirit [only] quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing") began to fancy that Christ's flesh, as such, had a power of giving spiritual life; then, that Christ's body was present *in* the bread, or that the bread by some mysterious change, became, to all intents and purposes of giving life, *all one* with Christ's body;* and lastly, that it was not bread at all, but Christ's body hidden under the appearance of bread.

As for the water in baptism, though no one has *yet* pretended that it is transubstantiated into the Holy Spirit, yet many are on the high-road to it. Men fancy that there is, in the water itself, a certain spiritual power of purifying the soul; and, being naturally anxious to have as much as they can of so good a thing, they are not satisfied with Christ's baptism, which can only be performed once, but have invented another under the name of *holy water*, [that is, water mixed with salt to keep it sweet, and solemnly blessed by a priest] the sprinkling of which, as they think, purifies them from lesser sins, and is a kind of weaker baptism, which may be repeated as often as they please.†

In all these cases it was men's misdirected reverence for the outward sign growing stronger and stronger, under the notion that they could not be too *pious*, which produced the erroneous doctrine; and then texts of Scripture were perverted, and strange philosophical explanations made out, to keep the error in countenance.

Akin to this superstition of seeking visible objects of worship, is the tendency in corrupt human nature (that is, of human feelings when not curbed and controlled by steady reason) to make worship itself consist in *outward acts* rather than *inward dispositions*. Each of these errors confirms the other, and they both spring from one root. We naturally look for some visible object to direct outward acts of worship towards. Thus the eastern part of the heavens, the *most sacred* part of a church,—the cross,—an altar,—an image or picture,—become objects *towards* which men bow or kneel: otherwise many would feel as if they were bowing, or kneeling to nothing at all. Again, an

*; This was plainly the notion of some ancient writers, who distinguished Christ's *sacramental* body from his *natural* body. It has been held also by Protestants.

† Bottles of this holy water are commonly sold to the people by the priests in Ireland and elsewhere; the manufacture costing the priest nothing more than the price of the salt, and of a holy candle, which is extinguished in the water during the benediction. But one candle will suffice for many gallons.

outward object of worship seems to *call* for outward marks of respect, and does not, of itself, seem to require more. "God is a SPIRIT," present to our *minds*, and therefore they "who worship Him, must worship Him *in spirit and in truth*," as our Saviour told the woman of Samaria, when she raised the question *where* men ought to worship God. But a picture or image does not immediately suggest the thoughts of inward worship of any kind; still less, of the best kind of worship, inward purity and uprightness of heart, and grateful love. It seems to us more like our fellow men, who can see only the outside; and as the only way in which we can show it reverence is by some outward gesture, so the more our religion becomes a religion of visible objects, the more it becomes a religion of outward worship. Both superstitions are, indeed, at bottom the same. The *same* tendency which makes men put the *sign* of an unseen object in the place of that object, makes them put the *sign* of inward worship in the place of inward worship. We are always apt to put the sign in the place of the thing signified; more especially when, by so doing, we can get rid of what is *very* irksome to us.

When we speak thus of *corrupt* human nature, you will understand us to speak of our feelings and impulses carried *too far*, or in a *wrong* direction. All our feelings and impulses are thus apt to go wrong; and, for that reason, our understandings and consciences were given us to keep them in proper bounds, and turn them to proper objects. When we speak thus, therefore, we allow that they have a *right degree* and *right objects*. Some outward expressions of religious feeling, for example, are *natural* to us in the best sense,—that is, they would be natural to a man whose reason and conscience had as complete control as God meant they should have, over his feelings. A man who is glad, will show gladness in his looks and gait. He who is in deep sorrow will also express that feeling in his face and step; and, in the same way, a reverent deportment becomes those who are reminded of the awful presence of God by entering into direct communion with Him in prayer. To check such *manifestations* of feeling would be to put an unnatural force on ourselves, and would certainly end in checking the feelings themselves. But as *violent* gestures of joy or sorrow strike a rational man as either theatrical and affected, or fit only for children or savages, in the affairs of common life,—so, in religion also, if our

religion be a rational one, we shall subdue the signs of our emotions, so as not to let them be showy, or such as may tempt ourselves or others to *over-act* our real feelings. Our feelings will be calm and steady, and our gestures moderate and decent. As nations, in proportion as they become civilized (that is, less carried away by sense and feeling, and more ruled by reason) become less fond of outward gestures, and mere showy ornaments and finery, so will it be with a rational religion, as compared with superstition.

: *Ceremonies* again—or outward rites *appointed* as signs of inward worship—may be very useful in their place. They may serve as outward signs to impress men with reverential feelings, and suggest holy thoughts: but it is plain, that, in proportion as men become more and more apt of themselves to feel such sentiments and entertain such thoughts, they will stand less and less in need of ceremonies; and that these ceremonies (unless simple and easy to be understood, and few) will tend rather to distract than to help their inward devotion, by forcing them, at every turn, to attend to unnecessary *signs*; and, while thus proving a sort of torture to the really devout worshipper, they will (if made too many and too intricate) become a mere routine of bodily exercises to the ignorant and unreflecting.

Every religious ceremony or exercise, indeed, however well calculated, in itself, to improve the heart, is liable to degenerate into mere form, and consequently, to become superstitious: but, in proportion as the outward observances are the more complex and difficult, and the more unmeaning or unintelligible, the more danger is there of superstitiously attaching a sort of magical efficacy to the bare outward act, independent of mental devotion. If, for example, even our prayers are liable, without constant watchfulness, to become a superstitious form, by our “honouring God with our lips while our heart is far from Him,” this result is almost unavoidable when the prayers are recited in an unknown tongue, and with a prescribed number of “vain repetitions,” crossings, and telling of beads.* And men of a timorous mind, having once taken up a wrong notion of what religion consists in, seek a refuge from doubt and anxiety, a substitute for inward piety, and too often, a compensation for an evil life, in an endless multiplication of superstitious observances;

* “Beads” (properly *prayers* which were *bid*) have come to signify what men *count* their prayers by.

of pilgrimages, sprinklings with holy water, veneration of relics, and the like.

Yet you will often hear men urging *our Saviour's example* in passing whole nights in prayer as a proof of the propriety of *long devotions* for *all men*, and alleging that the *less* able we are to attend to prayer, the more we need it, and therefore, the *more time* we should spend in it: just as if we were to say, that, because an invalid is too weak to feel disposed to eat, or able to digest the food which might nourish and strengthen him, therefore he is to be crammed with it the more, when he is not *inclined* for, nor able to digest it. What lurks at the bottom of such mistakes is the notion that there is some excellency in the mere *length* or *painfulness* of our devotions.

This last remark reminds us of a class of superstitious practices which is too important to be left out here;—we mean painful sufferings—such as fasting, scourging, watching, filthy dress, or nakedness—voluntarily undergone as in themselves pleasing to God, or necessary to atone for sin. This superstition springs partly from the tendency to confound that which is, in some cases, a *mark* of true piety, with true piety itself. The practice of virtue often obliges us to “deny ourselves” by renouncing many comforts for the sake of a good conscience; and the first teachers of Christianity, in particular, were called upon to expose themselves to great peril, and great actual suffering, for the sake of Christ. Now, virtue practised under difficulties is the more admired for that reason. The greatness of the sufferings undergone, *on its account*, is taken as a mark and measure of the strength of virtuous principle which enables a man to bear them. Such sufferings are then only really admirable when God's providence *calls* us to undergo them in the path of duty. But men are apt to forget this, and to confound together the thought of *merit* and of *pain*, because they see the two things often joined together. So, some persons, when they found Paul speaking of his being, “in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness;” and not considering that these sufferings were forced upon him; and that he was so far from *courting*, that he avoided them, whenever he could with honour; fell in love with the romantic and showy outside marks of his piety, and thought they were imitating him when, for no good reason at all, they inflicted these sufferings on themselves. This was

far more ridiculous than the case of Don Quixote. He *first* fancied that the world was full of robbers and enchanter, and then sallied out as a knight-errant to destroy them; but he was not so foolish as to imagine that he could become a true knight-errant, by merely riding about in armour, and *giving himself* hard knocks every now and then. Yet foolish as the thing appears when you look into it, this confusion of *merit* with *mere suffering* appears everywhere,—not in corrupted Christianity alone, but in all the forms of heathenism in ancient and in modern times. There is plainly a tendency in human nature to regard pain and privation, especially when voluntarily and gratuitously self-inflicted, as acceptable to God. The notion evidently is not derived either from Christianity as such, or from Mahometanism, or from Paganism, or from any particular form of paganism, (since it is found in all these various religions,) but from some tendency in human nature itself.

It probably, indeed, springs partly from another source than that which has been just pointed out. We are naturally averse, as I said, from the company of God—not only because we are unlike Him, but because we feel that we have offended Him, and may expect *punishment*. Conscience not only upbraids us for what we do amiss, but “if not forcibly stopped, naturally, and always, of course, goes on to anticipate a higher and more effectual sentence which shall hereafter second and affirm its own.”* Hence we find that, among the very heathens, there was in wicked men often a keen sense of having deserved vengeance, and a vague solicitous looking round, as it were, of the mind in every direction, expecting that, from some point or other, that vengeance would assuredly overtake them; and a starting at every unlucky accident, as if it were “a judgment for their sins.” This notion of something being wanted to *appease* the wrath of Heaven for past transgressions, as distinct from reformation for the time to come, was probably one great source of the immorality of the heathen religions. Men’s thoughts were turned away from reformation for the future to atonement for the past. The anger of the higher powers, *already incurred*, was the foremost thought, and the means of averting *that* were the great object of anxiety. Now, it is quite true (as we know from Revelation) that, though the good and merciful God cannot thirst for revenge like the weakest of His creatures, yet there was

* Bishop Butler.

something more required than mere repentance on our part,—not, indeed, to make us objects of God's mercy, for that we were when He *gave* his Son to die for us, but to make it wise and just for Him to treat us with favour as his dear children. But the mischief was, that men's minds fixed themselves almost wholly on that *something more*; and, pursued by a continual dread of punishment, they sought, by self-inflicted penances and hardships, or costly offerings and sacrifices, to *satisfy* the divine justice. The issue was, that religion came to wear the shape of a plan for tolerating vice, at the expense of paying certain fines, and suffering certain penalties; and this will be, in the end, the shape of any religion which regards sin as something still to be *atoned for* by Man himself, in the practice of rites different from ordinary right conduct. Christianity met the difficulty by teaching us that an *atonement* has been made; but an atonement in making which *we* have no share. It tells us that sin (considered as an obstacle to full pardon on repentance) has been so for ever *put away*, as that *nothing* remains for us to do, but to accept the offer of eternal life by turning to God; and, knowing now that “our labour is not in vain in the Lord,” set ourselves, with his help, to that practice of virtue which is, and must be, at all times our duty, and without which we “shall never see God.” And the only *pain* God requires us to undergo—not as an *atonement* for sin, but as a natural *consequence* of it, is, the pain and toil which a man has to undergo in *reforming* his life,—a pain and toil which will always be the *greater* the more sinful his life has been, and the longer he has continued in sin. Hence it leads us to regard the sufferings of this mortal life, not as vengeance taken on our sins, but as fatherly corrections,—and a painful discipline necessary for our improvement, in which “God dealeth with us as with children; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?”

Yet though this was so plainly the teaching of Christ and his Apostles, superstition would not quit its hold on men; the rather, because it flatters our pride to think that we can ourselves do something in the way of atonement; and it encourages us in sin to think that we can pay off the score by a certain amount of suffering. Hence the notion, prevalent amongst Roman-catholics, of making satisfaction for sin by penances, or costly offerings; and the belief, that what is wanting to the full amount of suffering in this life may be made up for in the next by the pains of purgatory. For they do not commonly regard purgatory

as a place where souls are *made better* by correction, but as a place where they discharge their debt of suffering owed to the divine justice. Indeed, if the souls there were *improved* by chastisement, the remitting of the pain by indulgences would be no favour to them, but the reverse. It would be as if a physician were to prescribe some nauseous medicine to a patient, as *necessary* for the cure of his malady ; and then, as a great favour, *indulge* him with a *dispensation* from taking the medicine. And, by the bye, when Roman-catholic bishops and others speak of the great *benefit* to the soul from eating eggs instead of flesh in Lent, and, *at the same time*, of the great *indulgence* of their Church in *relaxing* this rule to a certain degree, they contradict themselves ; for, if egg-eating does the soul good, allowing men to eat flesh instead, is just the same sort of *kindness* as it would be to let a sick child eat a piece of gingerbread, instead of swallowing medicine.

We have gone thus largely into the present subject, in order to show that the errors of Romanism spring from corrupt human nature, which we all carry with us. And we think that, if you reflect and inquire, you will find enough to convince you that superstition is an evil against which Protestants have need to be on their guard, even though there were no such thing as the Church of Rome in the world. Let us not think ourselves safe merely because we are not Romanists. Many of those Israelites (2 Kings, xviii.) who worshipped the brazen serpent may have thought themselves safe, because they did not adore the abominations of the Canaanites, or the Moabites, or the Zidonians. The Church of Rome, again, thought herself safe, because she kept clear of pagan idolatry ; not perceiving that she was indulging just the same spirit as created that idolatry. We, too, may think ourselves safe as long as we do not become Roman-catholics, and yet may indulge all the while the same spirit of superstition as makes Roman-catholic practices pernicious. To think, for example, that the mere bodily receiving of the communion, without "feeding on Christ in our hearts by faith," can be of any spiritual benefit to us, is plainly *superstition* : to think that the *washing* of baptism can save us, if we do not perform the conditions of the baptismal covenant, is plainly *superstition* ; to think that there can be any merit in merely *saying* prayers, or *reading* Scripture, without attending to what we read, and really consenting to what we say, is plainly superstition : to think that

a man's eternal happiness can be made safer by committing his carcass to consecrated ground, is plainly superstition.

In a word,—where anything, not in itself moral or religious, is *connected* with religion, superstition fastens upon that, because it is “worldly,” and lets the rest go. Thus, when God's justice is described in Scripture as vengeance, to show us that it pursues the offender as sternly as a revengeful man *would* pursue his enemy, superstition fastens on the thought of God's thirsting for *revenge*, and regards sin only as an offence which provokes in God a desire of inflicting pain on somebody. Again, when water, or bread and wine, are made *signs* of the power of the Holy Spirit, or of Christ's body and blood sacrificed for us, superstition fastens on the water, or the bread and wine, as if they were the things themselves. When a place must be set apart for divine worship, superstition fancies that God dwells in that *place*, rather than in the hearts of the worshippers. When pictures or images of holy persons are set before us, superstition fastens on the image, as if it were the reality. When rites or ceremonies are used to *express* our devotion, superstition *makes* them our devotion. When prayers have to be *said*, superstition makes the *saying* them, prayer. When good books are to be perused, superstition makes the perusal, edification. When works are to be done *from a good motive*, superstition makes the outward action the good works. When sufferings *for righteousness*' sake are commended, superstition takes the suffering for merit; and so in many other instances. It seizes ever on the outward—on that which is not moral; on that which strikes the senses or the imagination—and fastens there; while true religion, on the contrary, calls on us to “lift up our hearts” from the earthly to the heavenly, and use the outward as a help to the inward.

The Church—to take one instance more—must have a certain discipline and organization, as well as other societies; and must so far resemble “the kingdoms of this world,” because, like them, it requires that everything should be done in it “decently and in order.” Now, then, it is upon all that the Church has, as an outward society, that superstition fastens itself, and thinks of the outward frame of the society as the one thing needful. This has already gone so far among us, that we are continually hearing those very things appealed to as fitting the Church to

be a "witness of the truth," which have really least to do with that character. For, so far as uniformity of profession is produced by implicit submission to *authority*, or by any pains and penalties, or by any other means than a free and impartial examination of evidence, it ceases to have any value as *testimony*. If ten millions merely repeat on trust what *one* has said, or profess what they are compelled by law to profess, their voices are of no more real importance than if they were echoes from the side of a rock.

And again, so far as uniformity of outward practices is secured by strict discipline, or a politic structure of ecclesiastical government, (though these may be excellent things in their way,) yet, *so far*, it ceases to be *evidence* of the binding influence of Christ's spirit, leading men to "walk in love," and "mind the same things;" because it is notorious that heathen hierarchies (like that of the grand Lama, for instance) maintain a wonderful outward unity by similar means.

But, on the contrary, a unity in the profession of essential truth, springing from free examination made by persons who are left at liberty, and encouraged to examine for themselves, this, though it will always be found mixed with many differences of opinion about lesser things, is a real testimony to the truths agreed in, which minor differences make all the more undeniable. And a cordial agreement amongst Christians, in furthering the cause of Christianity, with a generous toleration of smaller differences, with a feeling of love and brotherhood amongst those who belong to societies *independent* of each other, this is a real evidence of true christian union.

Again, a sanctity which shows itself in self-inflicted mortifications, or outward signs of humility, or in the pomp and splendour of ceremonies—such a sanctity, whatever else it may be, is nothing *peculiar* to Christianity, and does not make the Church which has it Christ's *witness* to the world. For it plainly *may* spring from fanaticism or superstition; and, in fact, does, in many false religions, at any rate, spring from these. The Chinese ceremonies are just as splendid, and even more numerous, than those of the Greek or Roman churches; and an Indian fakir is often a much greater "ascetic" than the sternest monk in Christendom.

But that sanctity which consists in the sober and consistent practice of christian morals,—that real virtue which is "comely,

honest, and of good report," always and everywhere,—that "moderation" which "uses the world without abusing it"—which is ready to sacrifice *all* when duty requires it, but is not afraid temperately to enjoy what God gives richly,—that sanctity which consists in walking "righteously, soberly, and godly, in this present world," and which, borrowing no help from enthusiasm, or pride, or vanity, relies, in the meekness of a rational and serious faith, on the unseen help of God's grace,—such a sanctity as this is strong and convincing evidence of the divine origin of that faith from which it is seen to spring.

Do not suppose, then, that you are safe from superstition, because a great many things were cast out of our Church at the Reformation, which had been abused to superstition by the Church of Rome; and everything in itself superstitious was rejected. There are a great many things which *cannot* be dispensed with, that may be, as we have shown, abused into occasions of superstition. Such are the sacraments; prayer, public and private; instructions from the ministers of the word; buildings, and days set apart, either wholly or partly, for these purposes. All these, and many other good things which are perpetually made occasions of superstition, we cannot dispense with. The more vigilance, therefore, must we use in our own case, and inculcate upon others, in guarding against the inroads of superstition.

In no point, we may be assured, is our spiritual Enemy more vigilant. He is ever ready, not merely to tempt us with the unmixed poison of known sin, but to corrupt even our food, and to taint even our medicine with the venom of his falsehood. For religion is the medicine of the soul: it is the designed and appropriate preventive and remedy for the evils of our nature. The subtle tempter well knows that no other allurements to sin would be of so much avail, if this medicine were assiduously applied, and applied in unadulterated purity: and he knows that superstition is the specific poison which may be the most easily blended with true religion, and will the most completely destroy its efficacy.

March 10, 1851.

No. V.—Part 2.

FEW things strike one more strongly in the Church of Rome than the great distinctions made in it between one class of Christians and another, and the different kinds and degrees of holiness attached to different ranks of its members. These distinctions are so great that their system seems, in many respects, not *one* religion adapted equally to all, but a set of different religions fitted for different persons, and calculated for different times.

Thus, for example, the great mass of the *laity* in the Church of Rome do not commonly think themselves bound to understand what are called “the Mysteries of the Christian Faith,”—that is, certain obscure points of doctrine, the accurate knowledge of which is reserved for the learned. And, as for such points, they are encouraged to exercise what is styled an “implicit faith,” as their safest course,—that is, they are exhorted to make up their minds that *whatever* the Church has determined about such matters must be true. Accordingly, though some of the laity are, at some times and in some places, *permitted*, as a privilege, to study the Scriptures, the *duty* of studying them is not now pressed upon *all*,* by the modern Church of Rome as it was by the ancient church.

* Chrysostom, for example, who was Patriarch of Constantinople, A.D. 398, after mentioning some texts which exhort to the study of the Scriptures, proceeds thus:—“But, it will be said, these injunctions are laid only on the priests . . . But that they are laid also on the laity, you shall hear from what follows:—Let the Word of God dwell in you richly,” &c.—(On the Priesthood, b. iv. § 8.) Compare the language of Pope Pius VI. (A.D. 1794) in his condemnation of the Synod of Pistoja:—“The doctrine, that ‘nothing but incapacity can excuse from reading the Scriptures,’ with the addition subjoined, that ‘the obscurity brought on the very chief truths arising from neglect of this precept, is notorious,’ is false, rash, and tends to disturb the peace of souls, and is elsewhere condemned in Quesnel.” Among the condemned propositions of Quesnel are the following:—“80. The reading of the sacred Scripture is the privilege of all. 81. The obscurity of the Word of God is no good reason why laymen should be dispensed from reading it. 82. Sunday should be kept holy by pious studies, especially of the sacred Scriptures. It is mischievous to desire to draw Christians off from reading these. 84. To snatch from Christians the New Testament, or to keep it closed against them, by depriving them of the means of understanding it, is to close Christ’s mouth upon them.”

And, again, the "Articles of Faith" [points necessary to be believed] in the Church of Rome, are more or fewer, according to the Age of the world. Points of doctrine that were once not *necessary*, become necessary in process of time, by being *declared* [authoritatively set forth as true] by the governors of the Church; so that (according to them) many things which might, without any great danger, have been doubted or questioned in the first century after Christ, cannot, without heresy, be doubted or questioned now. Indeed, it seems a fashionable opinion among Roman-catholics, at present, that the Church only gradually *discovered* many of the articles of the Christian faith, and that a process of discovery is going on still. They are (according to this view) just on the brink of one great discovery—that it is necessary to salvation not to doubt that the Virgin Mary was conceived free from original sin;—which is called the doctrine of her "immaculate conception;" and, hereafter, of course, it may be discovered that her mother and grandmother, &c., had a like honourable distinction. And as it was discovered, at the Council of Trent, that the Books of Maccabees were *inspired*, so it may soon be discovered that a thousand other books were inspired also. In short, Christianity may, in this way, be *developed* into almost anything necessary for the times, like a lump of Indian-rubber, that may be drawn out, or squeezed in, as the owner pleases.

As for practice, too, the laity do not generally think themselves bound to "aspire to evangelical perfection,"—that is, in plain words, they are not so ambitious as to desire to be as good as they might be,—but are satisfied with the inferior holiness of a "secular" [worldly] life; while those who aim at greater degrees of holiness than ordinary men are bound to seek, are called, in a peculiar sense, "spiritual" or "religious" persons.

Then, again, amongst these "religious" people themselves, there are various kinds and degrees of *perfection*. Some are only so far *perfect* as to renounce marriage and continue in a single life, as a state, in itself, more holy than a married life. Others, again, besides this, make over their property to the monastery in which they dwell, and live from thenceforth only on their share of the revenues of the monastery; which is called *poverty*, though many are in fact great *gainers* by the exchange.—The special perfection of some monks consists in hard bodily

labour. That of others, in perpetual silence, and abstaining altogether from flesh-meat. Others voluntarily place themselves entirely at the disposal of some superior; and their special perfection is *obedience*,—that is, chusing to give up personal responsibility, and the trouble and annoyance connected with acting for oneself.

Then, in men's devotions, there is a like variety. Some put themselves under the special "patronage" of one saint, and some of another. Some take "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph," as the most frequent objects of their worship; some, the Heart of Christ; some, his five wounds. It is the special aim of some to commemorate the grief of the Virgin Mary; of others, the Passion of our Lord, &c.

The clergy, too, or priesthood, are considered, as by virtue of their office, more holy than the laity. *They* [the priests] are supposed to have the exclusive privilege of offering up the Body and Blood of Christ as a sacrifice for the sins of the people, and so making atonement for them; and it is held that the priests alone can forgive *mortal* [greater] sins, though *venial* [lesser] offences may be pardoned without their intervention. And the priesthood are a separate class, having the exclusive power of admitting men into their Order; so that the people are quite dependent upon the priests for all the spiritual benefits of which the priests are the sole procurers and distributors.

Others, again, look upon all these things as what is called a mere piece of priestcraft—an artful contrivance of the clergy to keep the people in dependence on themselves.

Both, in our opinion, are wrong; though, certainly, those who refer all to priestcraft maintain a much more probable opinion than the others.

For it is most manifest, from the New Testament, that Christ and his Apostles did *not* intend that the Church which they founded should encourage or admit such distinctions as we have spoken of, among its members. But many persons, from having got a wrong notion into their heads of the *UNITY* [oneness] of the Church, as if that unity consisted in the members of the Church being all under one outward *government*, do not perceive the full amount of Scripture-evidence against the practice of dividing Christians into different ranks and classes, with different christian privileges. For you will find, on looking carefully at

the principal passages in the New Testament, where the "*oneness*" of Christians is spoken of, that the uppermost thought in the minds of the Sacred Writers plainly was this—that all Christians are admitted to exactly *the same* gospel-privileges, Some Christians, indeed, may make a better, and some a worse *use* of those privileges; but *all* have the privileges of the gospel equally and alike, and *all* are *bound* to make the best use of them they can.

Thus, for example, when the Apostle Paul says, (Gal. iii. 26—28;) "Ye are *all* the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Jesus Christ have *put on Christ*. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for *ye are all one* in Christ Jesus;" it is manifest that he is thinking not of unity of government, nor even of brotherly love, but of all Christians having the same gospel privileges.

In like manner, when addressing the [Gentile] Ephesian Christians, he says,—“Christ is our peace who hath made both [Jews and Gentiles] *one*, and hath broken down the middle-wall of partition between us” (Eph. ii. 14); it is manifest that, here also, he is thinking of all believers having the *same* privileges. For he is making a contrast between the state of the Ephesians formerly, under the Mosaic dispensation, and their state now as believers in Christ. Under the Law, there *was* a distinction between Jews and Gentiles. The Jews *had* certain privileges, to which Gentiles (even though worshippers of the one true God) were not admitted. Under the gospel, on the contrary, the privileges of all are the same; the Law, which made a separation, being taken away, and no new distinction made by the gospel.

Accordingly, the Apostles tell us that they freely imparted, without reserve, *all* the religious knowledge which Christ had entrusted to them. They did not “shun to declare *all* the counsel of God.” (Acts, xx. 27.) They describe themselves as “warning *every man*, and teaching *every man* in *all wisdom*,” that they may “present *every man perfect* in Christ Jesus.” (Coloss. i. 28.) They pray that their converts “may be able to comprehend, *with all Saints*, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which

passeth knowledge, that they might be filled with [up to] all the fulness of God." (Eph. iii. 19.)

They could not, indeed, make all persons know everything *at once*; because learning anything takes time, and men will make more or less progress, in the same time, according to their years, natural abilities, diligence and zeal; and hence they speak sometimes to their disciples as being, some, *babes*, and some, *perfect* or full-grown men. But they had no thought of encouraging men to *continue babes*. On the contrary, the Apostle blames the Hebrews, very severely, for remaining so long no better than children, and not "going on to perfection." (Heb. v. 12—14, and vi. 1.) And he describes the christian ministry as appointed "for the edifying [building up] of the body of Christ, till we *all* come, in *the unity of the faith* and of the *knowledge* of the Son of God, unto a *perfect man*, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; that we be no more *children*, . . . but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up unto Him in all things." The Apostles then, as you see, exhorted *all* their converts to make themselves fully acquainted with the whole of the religion which they preached, and, therefore, must have thought it such a religion as ordinary men (such as the great Body of the first converts were) *could* make themselves fully acquainted with.

As for the abstruse speculations and refinements, therefore, of what are called, in the Church of Rome, the "School-Divines," we may be sure that—whether they are true in themselves or not—they are; at any rate, no part of the christian *revelation*; and those who are disposed to be dazzled by the ingenuity and learning of such writers, ought to make this reflection: "If all this be so, what an *imperfect* revelation must the Evangelists and Apostles have given us! How much of the essential parts of Christianity they must have *omitted*, and left for learned men, in after ages, to supply!" Now, since this is not to be believed, it follows that all their speculations are either mere pieces of philosophy profanely turned into articles of faith, or idle fancies, arising out of the presumptuous wish to be wise above the measure of knowledge allotted to man.

And as for practice, the Apostles plainly knew nothing of the doctrine that men might act better than they were strictly *bound* to act, or that any one class of men were bound to be more holy than another. The Apostles had learned from their

Master that the first and chief commandment was to "Love the Lord with *all* the heart," and that, even when we had done all that was commanded, in this or any other precept, we should confess ourselves "unprofitable servants," who had merely done our *duty*, and no more. And, if this be so, it is absurd to say that one man is bound to be more holy than another, or that any man can, in any instance, act more virtuously than he is bound to act; because we *cannot* love God with more than *all* our heart; and if we do give our whole hearts to Him, we cannot but seek to please Him in every possible way. Some may be *called* to serve God in one *way*, and some in another; but it is not the amount or kind of outward service rendered, but the inward disposition, which God values. A son who loves his father so well as to be ready to die for him, is as truly loving a child as he who actually dies for his parent; and he that is *ready to forsake* all for Christ is as dear to Christ as if he had actually forsaken all for Him. Now, as *all* men are bound to be *ready* to give up all for Christ, he who actually, at the call of duty, forsakes all, that he may follow the Son of God, cannot be doing more than others would be bound to do in the same circumstances: *he* is only showing *proof* (to outward observers) of that love which all others are equally bound to feel, and which God (who sees the heart) may know to be in them, without any such sacrifice.

But what Roman-catholics admire is giving up some thing, under the notion of its being for Christ, when they are *not called* on to give it up: which is just as if a son were, without any other reason in the world, to stab himself, in order to show his affection for his father. This is a theatrical kind of perfection, of which the Apostles knew nothing. When Paul, for example, advises some persons not to marry, it is not on the ground that they would make a great and meritorious sacrifice by renouncing the comforts of matrimony, but because, in a time of persecution, they would free themselves from many cares and temptations, which he wishes, he says, to "*spare* them," (1 Cor. vii. 26, 28, &c.) And, while exhorting men to have no fellowship with the *works* of darkness, he is so far from exhorting any one to retire to a monastery or a desert, that he speaks of Christians "going out of the world" (1 Cor. v. 10) as a thing which he did not, and could not have contemplated. On the

contrary, he desires every man to abide in the "calling" wherein he was when converted.

In the matter of devotion, too, it is plain that the Apostles thought only of *one* object, and *one* kind of worship for all. They set before men "one God, and one Mediator between God and men—the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a sacrifice for all," (1 Tim. ii. 5, 6,)—and never drop a word of any other "patrons" or "intercessors," or peculiarly acceptable forms of prayer, or peculiarly holy places for worship; except, indeed, when they *warn* us against "will-worship," and "voluntary humility," and the "worshipping of angels," as things inconsistent with truly "holding the Head," even Christ, in whom we are "complete." (Col. ii. 10, 18, 23.)

As for some Christians enrolling themselves in special societies, in honour of some particular saints, whose peculiar directions they follow as their "rule" of pious living, or presuming to give themselves such titles as the "Society of Jesus," as if *they* were specially and more than others his followers,—we may judge how the Apostles would have treated such conduct, from the way in which Paul rebukes the Corinthians for calling themselves, some after Paul, some after Apollos, some after Cephas, and some after Christ.* "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in [into] the name of Paul?" (1 Cor. i. 13.) So, doubtless, he would have said to the Church of Rome in our days—"Is Jesus divided? Was Francis crucified for you?† or were ye baptized into the name of Dominic?" The Apostles, indeed, exhorted men to be "followers of them," but it was only "as they were followers of Christ," in those things in which all might equally follow their example. (1 Cor. xi. 1.)‡

* These last, it is plain, could not have thought themselves *exclusively* Christians; otherwise they would have *separated* from the communion of the rest. But the apostle is speaking of division (parties) in the Church at Corinth, not *from* it.

† Indeed, some zealous Franciscans have gone very near asserting that he *was*. They pretend that St. Francis had the marks of our Lord's wounds in his body. There is nothing in all the wild tricks of our wildest fanatics to surpass the extravagant behaviour which Roman-catholic writers attribute to and admire in this crazy man.

‡ This is one of the many cases where the sense is obscured by the present division of the chapters. Read this verse in connexion with the last part of chap. x. "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God: *even as I* please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved. Be *ye* followers of *me*, even as I also am of Christ."

Then, as for any class of sacrificing priests in the Christian Church, the Apostles quite disown anything of that kind. They speak of one Priest in heaven, Jesus Christ; and, on earth, they teach Christians to consider themselves as *all priests*,—all “brought near” to God,—all “having boldness to enter into the holiest place,”—all qualified to offer “the sacrifice of praise,” and to present “their bodies a living sacrifice” to God. Those, therefore, who, without being “called of God,” *assume to themselves* the office of mediators and sacrificing priests over their brethren, intrude upon the exclusive privilege of the True Priest—the Son of God,—even as Korah, Dathan, and Abiram usurped an office which had been given exclusively to Aaron.* It is not enough for these men that they “stand before the congregation to *minister* unto them,” but they must needs “seek the priesthood also.”

Such persons, therefore, as profess to believe in the divine origin of Romanism, on the ground of its admirable suitableness to *human nature*, are plainly owning themselves *disbelievers* in the divine origin of Christianity. And when they talk of the necessity of *accommodating* the religion preached by the Apostles to the tastes and manners of men, they forget that the great aim of Christianity is to REGENERATE man’s nature. Christianity does not (as the law of Moses did) *permit* things on account of the “hardness” of men’s hearts; because it brings the promise of the Spirit, which is given to *change* our hearts, and make us “new creatures.” Accordingly, though the Pagans in Italy were, in Paul’s time, just as fond of altars and sacrifices, images, shows, and gaudy spectacles, as the Christians of Italy are now, that Apostle never thought of accommodating the simple worship of the Church to their tastes; and though the Greeks at Corinth were quite as fond as the modern school-men of subtle and abstruse inquiries, Paul was so far from indulging them therein, that, for that very reason, he determined to “know nothing among them, but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.”†

* Numb. xvi. 9. Aaron and his sons were distinctly “called of God” to the Priesthood; being, in that respect, a type of Christ, Heb. v. 4, 5. It is manifestly the *clerical* usurpers of the office of sacrificing Priests, (which God has given to Christ, and not to them,) whose offence most resembles the sin of the *Levite* Korah.

† 1 Cor. ii. 1, 2. Compare the advice of a Romish missionary:—“During the whole time I have spent in teaching the heathen, I never once met with one who was set against our religion by the *incomprehensible Mystery of the Trinity*. Many are much more offended at the *Incarnation*. . . . Wherefore the Mysteries of the

Indeed, when we accommodate Christianity to corrupt human nature, instead of gaining those whom we strive to conciliate, we are in danger of losing our own faith. We are like the man who boasted of having "caught a Tartar," when the fact was that the Tartar *caught him*.

But neither, on the other hand, was it merely the craft and ambition of the *Clergy* which broke up the unity [oneness] of the Church, by introducing among Christians an Order of sacrificing priests, and such other ranks and distinctions between brethren as we have noticed; but the natural growth of superstition brought such consequences with it.

When, for example, men had come to fancy that religious practice consisted in *outward* actions, rites and ceremonies, splendid offerings and painful sufferings, apart from the inward disposition of the worshippers, it was natural for them to think that religious knowledge was chiefly concerned about profound *speculative mysteries*. As soon as ever men, by common consent, give up the notion of turning any kind of knowledge to a *practical* use, then studious persons will pursue inquiries into it only to gratify their curiosity, and others will neglect it altogether. Chemistry is now known to be practically useful in farming, medicine, &c., and therefore active and enlightened farmers and physicians make themselves acquainted with its principles. But, before men thought of applying it to common purposes, chemists employed themselves chiefly in searching for the "philosopher's stone," and the "elixir of life," and made a wonderful mystery of their science, wrapping it up in strange and uncouth words, which were explained only to their favoured disciples; while the farmers stuck to the old *routine* of their practice, and would have laughed (as many do still) at the notion of expecting *them* to know anything of chemistry.

And, just as gross-minded men (from being naturally averse from inward practical religion) put the mere outward signs and expressions of good dispositions in the place of true piety, so

Passion are not to be rashly set before the converts; but, in imparting them, we should observe these cautions:—1. To dwell and expatiate upon the prodigious miracles which gave a glory to the death of Christ, which made it plain that the God-man did not die by a violent, but a voluntary death. 2. After dwelling on such topics, let the *image* of Christ, hanging on the cross, be proposed for *adoration, illuminated with many lighted candles so as to make a grand spectacle*, and adorned with other such incentives to piety," &c.—Alexander de Rhodes, History of Tonquin, quoted by Fabricius, *Lux Evangelii*, pp. 669, 670.

(and for the same reasons) ingenious and inquisitive men were apt to put the mere knowledge of truth in the place of that practical knowledge which Christ intended that we should pursue.

For, when the sacred Writers speak with commendation of "knowing God," they always mean such a knowledge as is attended with the *practical effects* of fearing, loving, and obeying Him. "The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil, that is understanding." (Job, xxviii. 28.) "He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: Was not this *to know me*? saith the Lord." (Jer. xxii. 16.) "He that loveth is born of God, and *knoweth* God: he that loveth not *hath not known* God." (1 John, iv. 7.)

Accordingly, in the Scriptures, it is practical knowledge only that is set before us. We are told so much about God as was necessary to make us love, honour, fear and trust in Him; so much about evil spirits, as was fit to put us on our guard against them, and keep us from falling into mischievous mistakes about their power, &c.; and so of the rest. But we are not told anything merely to gratify our curiosity, or amuse our minds.

The value of christian knowledge, then, consists in its fitness to regulate christian feeling and behaviour. But men who were *over-inquisitive* (as men are apt to be) about the unseen world, did not attend to this practical character of revealed truth, but valued it chiefly as giving them new *information* about such matters; and when they found it said that Christ came to *reveal* God, and enable us to *know* Him, they fancied that such a knowledge as they longed for was meant—that is, not merely a knowledge of God's character and conduct towards *us*, but a full knowledge of what He is *in Himself*, and of his secret decrees about the universe, and a thousand other things, of no practical importance to ourselves. And, because, with all their efforts, they could not make *Scripture* even *seem* to tell much about such things, they were forced to bring in human philosophy, and a vast mass of pretended traditions, to help it out: like one who, when the light of Heaven failed, should bring a *lamp* to the sun-dial, in order to find the hour.

And as the reputation of great and abstruse knowledge flattered the learned men, who were thereby *distinguished* from the vulgar, so, on the other hand, the common people found a

his scholars *do* see the proof, they believe those propositions, not on their teacher's word, but because they themselves perceive them to be true; though they might not have been able to master the proof without their teacher's assistance. In like manner a christian teacher is bound not merely to deliver *all* the doctrines of Christianity, but to help men to see with their own eyes that they *are* the doctrines of Christianity. Otherwise, there would be two classes of Christians—one of *masters*, who believed on *evidence*, and another of disciples, who believed on *the word of their masters*. Now our Saviour has expressly forbidden us to call, in this sense, any man our "master" or "teacher" upon earth; giving as his reason for that prohibition, that "one is *our Master*, even Christ;" and *all* we are "brethren." And this He did expressly to guard against the same abuse arising in his Church which had arisen in the Jewish; in which the Scribes did keep the people dependent on themselves, under the pretence that the people could not be proper judges of the sense of the law, but must take the meaning of it on the word of the learned. Our Lord, then, clearly means that christian teachers should not presume to debar men from inquiring whether the things taught are really the doctrines of our only Master, Jesus Christ, but should, on the contrary, encourage and enable men to rely *directly* on Christ's teaching.

Indeed, if the common people could not understand the Scriptures for themselves, it would be plainly proper to take the Bible out of their hands altogether; since, in that case, they could not make a *good*, and would be apt to make a *bad* use of it. They could not make a good use of it, because they could know no more about its meaning than their teachers told them; and their teachers might tell them the meaning without giving them the book; and, on the other hand, they would be apt to make a bad use of it, because, in reading it, they would be continually tempted to fancy that they *could* understand it.

But if men are bound to see that the doctrine they receive was really taught by Christ, then we *are* bound to put into their hands the authentic record of Christ's teaching contained in the Holy Scriptures: and then all who receive such doctrine, upon the ground of seeing it to be the meaning of Christ's own words, will be equally, and in the same sense and degree, immediately "disciples of Christ."

No doubt, however, more knowledge of things *connected with religion*, may be properly required in teachers than is required of all Christians. Some of the *objections*, for instance, to Christianity are such as some able and learned men have found answers to, but which the generality of Christians cannot be expected to answer, or even to *understand*. But this circumstance does not divide Christians into classes, admitted to unequal christian privileges.

A man who is acquainted with the virtues of certain medicines, and knows how to apply them for the cure of some disorders he is subject to, has no advantage over another man who is ignorant of those medicines, and at the same time *exempt from those diseases*. And, in like manner, one man possessing learning and powers of deep reflection, may perceive certain difficulties, and feel the force of certain objections, which do not strike an ordinary man; at the same time he may so apply his knowledge and his abilities, as to find answers to those objections, and solutions of those difficulties. But another man inferior to him in mental powers and cultivation, if he is but able to give a good "reason of the hope that is in him" is not worse off, *as a Christian*; though as a philosopher he is inferior to him, and though he is unable to understand either the answers to certain objections, or the objections themselves.

In this, and other similar cases, the differences between one man and another, are not *made* by *Christianity*, or introduced by the gospel, but they are such as exist on *all* subjects.

But from perceiving that those who have leisure and abilities beyond what fall to the lot of the generality, are enabled and may be expected to acquire a larger share of learning generally, and of what is called "theological learning" among the rest, men came to fancy that none but "learned theologians" could understand the Scriptures; not considering that the great uses of theological learning are, either (1) to enable the learned to make the meaning of Scripture *plain* to the unlearned, or (2) more fully to establish the proof of the authority of Scripture, and answer learned objections to it.

Then, again, men readily fell, without being distinctly aware of what they were doing, into a habit of confounding the case of the clergy with the case of other professions. They *feel* as if the clergyman stood, in religious matters, in much the same

place as the soldier in respect of military, and the sailor in respect of naval affairs, and the physician in respect of remedies for bodily diseases, and the lawyer in legal matters.

We are very apt too, when anything troublesome is to be done, first to wish, and then to think, that it may be done *by proxy*; and, if some other persons are *peculiarly bound* to do it, we are apt to fancy that their doing it is enough, and that we are not bound at all.

A parish clerk, for instance, was originally a *clerk* [person able to *read*] appointed for the purpose of *leading* the people (who could not read their prayer-books) in making the responses. *He* was, therefore, peculiarly bound to make the responses in an audible voice, in order that others might be able to make them after him. But, in course of time, people forgot the reason *why* he was so bound, and fancied that *he only* was obliged to repeat them. In like manner, when people perceived that the clergy were *peculiarly bound* to know the truths of religion, *in order that they might teach others*,—and to strict life, *as an example to others*,—and to take a leading part in the service of the church, *for the sake of order in the congregation*,—they forgot the reasons, and began to think that the clergy were to do all these things *for them*.

And in proportion as they eased themselves, they exacted more from the clergy. They required them to *know*, or pretend to know, more of christian doctrine than could be *taught* to the laity. They required them to *set* such an example as ordinary men could not *follow*, making the sanctity of their priests consist in a single life, and other points *peculiar* to their profession. And they made the Service of the church chiefly consist in rites which the priest only *could* do, and which he *might* do without the presence of any congregation at all,*—that is, in prayers and sacrifices *for the people*, performed in a language which they do not understand.

All this, again, was helped forward by the continual growth of superstition. For if, as superstition leads men to think, the service of God consists in outward rites, and if painful sufferings have a value in themselves to purchase pardon,—apart from the inward disposition of the worshippers,—there might really be something plausible in such notions of serving God *by proxy*.

* As in what are called, in the Church of Rome, "solitary masses."

Outward actions often may be done by others for us ; and, even when that is not possible, the reasons and proper way of doing them may be *studied* for us by others, who can tell us what to do, without requiring us to understand anything about the matter. If we owe a *debt* of money, another may pay it for us. We can hire a soldier to fight for us, or a pilot to steer our ship, or a barrister to plead our cause ; or we may get the advice of a skilful physician, and follow his directions implicitly.

And, as we saw that men's natural disposition to shrink from the presence of God led them to fancy that a number of inferior unseen Beings stood between them and the Most High, so similar feelings led them to *thrust* the priests *forward* between themselves and the unseen world. Man's heart (except when divinely purified) is too much turned from God to take delight in serving Him ; while yet, except when unusually depraved, he retains enough of the image of his Maker to have a natural reverence for religion, and a desire that God should be worshipped. Hence the disposition men have ever shown to substitute the devotion of the priest for their own ; to leave the duties of piety in his hands ; and to let him serve God in *their stead*.

Thus the service of God became, as it were, the *profession* of the clergy, and men looked rather to the *authority, skill, and intention** of the minister, than to their own dispositions for making the public prayers and the sacraments effectual means of grace ; and *sanctity* became the profession of the monks and friars, the mass of the people being quite satisfied that it was *somewhere* in their church, and feeling as if all the members must come in for a share of the *merits* of those holy persons.

The great power and influence, then, of the clergy and monks

* The Council of Trent, Sess. vii., determines thus :—

"If any one shall deny that there is not required in the ministers, whilst they make and administer the sacraments, an *intention* at the least of doing what the church does,—let him be accursed!" In spite of these plain words, some Roman-catholics assert that their church requires only the *outward appearance* of an intention on the part of the minister. This view was, indeed, taken by Catharinus, who was himself present at the Council of Trent ; but he is censured on that account by Bellarmine, the greatest modern theologian of the Church of Rome. Hence we see what admirable means the decrees of general councils are for putting an end to disputes, and what infallible certainty there is in that church about the indispensable means of grace ; when, after the judge has spoken, it remains for *private judgment* to interpret the sentence on a point which involves the safety of all. For if the doctrine of intention be true (as Bellarmine explains it), no Romanist can be sure that he was ever baptized, or that the Pope is a priest, or that the wafer he worships is anything more than a mere wafer.

in the Church of Rome are quite as much owing to the disposition of the people to shrink back, as to their own wish to stand forward. Nay, ambition seems, in some cases, really to have sprung up afterwards. A man who is as distrustful of himself as others are (or nearly so) may sometimes have "greatness thrust upon him" which he does not covet, but would rather decline; and then, from finding that he performs his part cleverly, he may grow confident; and, perceiving the advantages of his new position, use all possible means to secure and increase them. The Romish hierarchy did but take advantage, from time to time, of men's *natural disposition*, and their propensity to serving God by proxy, or "vicarious religion," as it may be called; engrafting successively on the system of their church such practices and points of doctrine as favoured that propensity, and which were naturally converted into a source of profit and influence to the priesthood. And, as long as the *sources* of such errors remain among ourselves, we shall need to watch against the danger which has actually overtaken others.

For, you will do well to remember how the movement which has ended in so many conversions to Romanism began. It did *not* begin by aggressions of Romish priests upon us, but by practices and notions resembling Romanism springing up among ourselves. Members of our Church, who declare that they never dreamt at first of ever passing over to Rome, grew gradually more and more like Romanists in their opinions and behaviour, and then found, to their own and their neighbours' astonishment, that Romanism was the very thing into which their principles and feelings naturally grew.

Guard, then, against these principles and feelings of corrupt human nature, and you will effectually guard against Priestcraft and its odious consequences.

3. Amongst those consequences there is none more loudly blamed as the peculiar characteristic of the Romish system than "pious frauds"—artifices used to make men (what is called) *devout* and submissive to the Church.

To what an extent the Church of Rome has carried that practice is, indeed, notorious.

That Church has not only permitted and encouraged the circulation of a thousand legends and stories about "the saints"

among the common people, which the learned not only *disbelieve* but laugh at; but it has solemn Services, in which known falsehoods of this kind are deliberately asserted in the lessons read, and even implied in the prayers offered to God; and relics are shown and devoutly worshipped in their churches as genuine, which are probably all spurious, and which cannot possibly be all true, inasmuch as the *same* relic is said to be in several different churches; and pretended miracles are put forward, which must proceed, in many cases, from deliberate and calculating imposture. And there are many practices among the people which the more enlightened often plainly see to be superstitious, and yet connive at, as producing, on the whole, a good effect, and done with a *pious intention*.

Now, all this was not the *mere* consequence of Priestcraft: for, though some of the frauds alluded to may have been, from the first, practised solely for the sake of getting money or power into the hands of the priests, yet in many others, no doubt, the end aimed at was *right in itself*, and, in many more, *seemed right and laudable* to those who took dishonest means for compassing it.

You may often have noticed how apt thoughtless people are to save themselves trouble by *deceiving* children into compliance with their will. They keep a child from straying into dark lanes by stories about ghosts and hobgoblins, or they persuade him to leave the room by (falsely) promising him a sugarplum elsewhere, and so forth. Such lies (besides being wrong) always bring more trouble in the end than they save for the present. Still they do save present trouble; and so those in charge of children are tempted to practise such deceit; which they commonly excuse by saying that it is "all for the child's good," and that "children cannot be managed otherwise."

Now, when the people were brought into the condition of children, and left without rational instruction in religious matters, it was natural to think of treating them as children are too often treated, and deceiving them for their good.

The priests *found* the multitude ready of themselves (as ignorant persons are) to believe marvellous tales and romantic adventures, and fancy they were surrounded by miracles and wonders; and it is probable that many of the false legends were originally stories that sprang up at first (as strange stories will)

among the people themselves, partly from mistake, and partly from pure fancy.

Now, when the clergy perceived that the belief of such fictions made the people apparently more devout, they thought them, at worst, but *innocent* illusions, which had a good effect on those who *could not* know better; and so the mischief went on, till, at last, the devotion of the people (such as it was) was really, to a great extent, built upon the belief of such falsehoods; and there was real danger that, if *that* support were taken from it, *all sense* of religion would be destroyed in their minds.

Now, truth is a steady thing, and acts steadily through the reason by the weight of evidence. But when you work on men's fancies and feelings alone, you work on a part of our minds which flags and becomes sluggish, when not continually roused by fresh and fresh excitement; just as a drunkard is tempted to drink more deeply every day, from finding that his constitution needs the stimulant more and more.

Hence, when once the clergy had *begun* to work on the people in this way, they found themselves tempted to go on, and *invent* new legends and miracles when the old had lost their interest, while many who would have scorned to *invent* such things, yet thought themselves justified in tolerating them, from a dread of "unsettling men's minds," and shaking their faith in the truths of religion, by exposing the falsity of what had been mixed up with them.

Here, then, again, in the case of pious frauds, the thing to be guarded against is that corrupt inclination, natural to all men, of sacrificing what we know to be *true* to what may seem *expedient*, and "doing evil that good may come." We must stand clear of Popish frauds and Jesuitical falsehoods—not merely because they are *Popish* and *Jesuitical*, but because they are frauds and falsehoods.

4. Again, the way in which human authority is put, by the Church of Rome, in the place of divine, is another error which some persons trace entirely to Priestcraft; whereas the truth is, that it springs quite as much from a *craving* after infallibility on the part of the people,—as we hope to show you plainly in the next Number.

No. VI.

WE Protestants are accustomed to think and speak of the way in which the Church of Rome requires implicit submission to all its teaching, as a mere piece of priestcraft,—a *tyranny* of the priests over the people; and to *wonder* how the people can be so slavish as to submit to such tyranny. But we should remember that this tyranny could never have been established at first, if the people had not been, themselves, disposed to submit to it. After it was once set up, people might be frightened and forced into outward submission; but it certainly was not set up originally by force. It *grew* up, like many other corruptions, in several other churches, as well as the Romish, out of the soil of human nature.

The truth is, that there is a strong tendency in human nature to save itself from the trouble of inquiry and the uneasiness of doubt. We do not like to be left for a moment in uncertainty or suspense; we are impatient of the labour of examining things for ourselves; we are alarmed at the danger of mistake, and uneasy under the sense of personal responsibility; and so we are disposed beforehand to accept a guide in religion, who shall confidently claim the power of conducting us with unerring skill, and who shall tell us that we have nothing to do but *follow him*. The Church of Rome, then, only took advantage of men's natural disposition, by offering itself as such a guide. That church was, long ago, the most *conspicuous* church in Europe, and, therefore, naturally drew men's eyes towards itself; and seemed to bid fairest for having that authority which they were eager to find *somewhere*.

Now it would, no doubt, be a great convenience if we had no need (whether in religion or in other matters) to examine *each point* separately, and make up our minds upon a *great number* of things, but only to settle *one point* once for all,—*who* is the proper guide in such matters?—and then follow his directions in each instance. This would be a great convenience, if we

could find the *right guide* more easily and surely, than we could find the *right way* without him.

But, even then, we should have first to *find* our guide, and satisfy ourselves that he was competent to direct us. And it is plain that we could, in no case, be *more* certain of going right in following a guide, than we were of *his* ability and willingness to conduct us aright. For no building can be more firm than the foundation it rests on.

If a traveller, for example, tells us something about France or Spain, which he says he witnessed in those countries, we cannot believe the facts on his word, *more* firmly than we believe that he is an honest man and was really there. Everything will depend on the *reasons* we may have for trusting his veracity. If we cannot be very sure of *that*, we cannot be very sure of the truth of what he tells us.

So also, in the case of the Church of Rome, no one can reasonably believe what that Church teaches, on its word, who is not first satisfied that the Church of Rome has authority to declare, absolutely, what Christ's religion is. If *that* be doubtful, then everything that Church teaches is (so far) equally doubtful. And if *we* cannot be *infallibly certain* that the Church of Rome is an infallible guide, we cannot be infallibly certain of anything on its word.

If, for example, a man believes the Church of Rome to be infallible, *because* the Lord said to Peter: "Upon this rock I will build my Church," and because *he thinks*—that, in that text Christ promised to make Peter and his successors infallible; and because *he thinks*, further, that the Bishops of Rome are the successors of Peter, meant in the promise; it is plain that he cannot be *more certain* of that Church's infallibility, than he is of the correctness of his judgment upon each and all of those matters on which he grounds his belief in the Church's infallibility. He cannot be infallibly sure that the Popes are unerring guides, unless he be first infallibly sure, not only that all Christ said was true, but also that Christ really made this promise; and that the meaning he puts upon it is correct; and that the Popes are the legitimate successors of Peter; and that the present Bishop of Rome is a lawful Pope.

And so, on *whatever* grounds a man builds his faith in the

infallibility of the Church of Rome, he must first be infallibly sure of *them*, before he can reasonably think himself infallibly sure of what is built upon them. And it is plain that, in making up his mind about the infallibility of his guide, a man cannot reasonably rely upon that very guide, as if he were already proved infallible. Here, then, is at least one point, in which we *must*, of necessity, exercise our private judgment, whether we think ourselves fit for such a task or not; while, upon the correctness of our judgment in *this* point, the whole security of our faith and practice, in following the guide whom we have chosen, must depend.

Now what corrupt human nature anxiously craves for is, to be infallible ourselves,—and that without any trouble or difficulty. Many Roman-catholics, indeed, conceal from themselves and others, that *this* is really what they seek, by saying that all they ask for is an *infallible guide*.

But it is plain that this is not *all* they really seek; because they are dissatisfied with the guidance of the Holy Scripture, which they themselves acknowledge to be infallible.

They say the Scripture is not sufficient, because they cannot be *certain* that it is the word of God, or again of its true meaning, but by being assured of these things by the Church.

In saying this, indeed, they, on their own principles, run into great inconsistency; because, if *they* cannot know the Scripture to be the Word of God, except the Infallible Church tells them so, the question is obvious,—How, then, does *the Church* know the Scriptures to be the Word of God? If *they* cannot tell the true meaning of Scripture, without the explanation of the Infallible Church, how does the Church discover the true meaning of Scripture? The Church must, plainly, know these things *before* it propounds them to the faithful; and therefore it must be *possible* to know them by some other means besides the declaration of the Church.

This, they will say, is by a divine inspiration granted to the Pope and other governors of the Church. But how are we to prove this inspiration? Is it by an appeal to Scripture itself?—that is, to the very book whose divine authority, and whose meaning, can only be known by the aid of the Church? By first assuming the very thing to be proved! or, by what Paul

calls "the signs of an Apostle"—the public display of undoubted miracles? But the pretended miracles of the Romanists are only witnessed by those who are already believers.

What they want, then, manifestly is, that they should themselves be infallibly certain of being guided aright in each instance; and this is just, in other words, desiring to be themselves infallible. A Roman-catholic will, indeed, often speak of himself as fallible, and as having no expectation of being otherwise. But his meaning must be (supposing him quite certain that he has an infallible guide, always accessible, and to which he constantly conforms)—his meaning must be, that he is fallible in all points not determined by the Church, and that, in what the Church has determined, he *would* be fallible if left to himself; that his exemption from the possibility of error is not *inherent* but *derived*. But actually and practically, he does consider himself infallible.

Though the gnomon [hand or pointer] of a sun-dial has no power of itself to indicate the hour, yet, when the sun shines on it, the motions of its shadow must be as correct as those of the sun's rays which it follows. And, in like manner, *he* is infallible, practically, in his belief, who always believes exactly what an infallible Church or leader believes.

It is very foolish, therefore, in Roman-catholics to laugh at those Protestants who claim, each man for himself, to be infallibly guided by the Holy Spirit; since *they* only claim to be, each man infallible, by following infallible *guidance*; and Roman-catholics do the same.

And, as for claiming immediate inspiration, it is just as reasonable to think that God inspires each particular Christian, as that he inspires the Popes or Bishops: whom Roman-catholics must mean, when they speak of the *Church* as a guide.

For if the Pope or the Bishops are to guide others, they must first be guided themselves. Now what guide do they follow when they set forth *new articles of Faith*? If the Scripture,—that is a rule which others have as well as they: and if it be a sufficient rule to *their* private judgment, why not to Protestants? If Tradition,—that is a rule which others too may have recourse to. But, if the Holy Spirit supplies them with new knowledge, over and above the plain meaning of Scripture and Tradition,—that is plainly saying that they are directly *inspired*; which is

just what they laugh at some Protestants for claiming to be. Nor can *they* consistently object that the differences amongst those Protestants who equally claim inspiration prove all their claims unfounded; since *Churches*, too, equally claiming infallibility, are divided just as much in doctrine and discipline. The Greek Church, for example, claims to be infallible as much as the Roman, and yet differs from it in its creed and government. And the Irvingites and Mormonites claim to be infallible, as Churches, in as high a manner as either the Greek or the Roman Church. If differences then between *men* claiming inspiration prove none of them to be inspired, differences between *Churches* claiming infallibility will prove that none of these is infallible.

But the truth is that both Roman-catholics and fanatical Protestants delude themselves by giving way to a craving after infallibility, which is part of our *corrupt* nature.

For it is plainly *not* God's intention to exempt us from all danger of mistake, and all labour of inquiry, and the responsibility of exercising our own judgments, whether good or bad, in matters of the greatest importance.

In all the most important affairs of this life, we are obliged to act upon mere probabilities, and sometimes very weak probabilities. With respect to this life, as well as the life to come, our highest interests require us to act continually with regard to the future. Yet, we have no infallible guidance at all with respect to what will happen to-morrow. We are left to calculate, as we best can, what is most likely; and consider carefully what is, under all the circumstances, the most prudent course for us to take. Nay, it is very remarkable that our knowledge is much more full and complete of things which do *not* directly concern us, than of those which do. We can foretell the motions of the heavenly bodies for centuries to come; but, as to things at our own doors, we "know not what a day may bring forth." The things *within our foresight* and certain knowledge are *out of our power*; and the things *within our power* are *out of our foresight*.

Thus, however convenient or desirable it might seem to us that we should have some infallible guidance in the things of this life, it is plain that God has determined otherwise. Each man is left, whether he be of great or of mean capacity, in the

midst of many difficulties, and in danger of going wrong continually, to find out what is most likely to serve his interest, and act accordingly. The courts of justice, which decide about our property, our liberty, and our lives, are not infallible. The art of medicine has no infallible certainty to guide its practice. Kings and parliaments, who have to provide for the safety of whole nations, can only take the measures which *seem to them* best; and may be, and often are, mistaken.

Some, indeed, have sometimes indulged the natural craving after infallibility, even in the affairs of this world. They have fancied that they could discover malefactors to a certainty, by spells and charms; or they have (from their own wishes) put faith in quack medicines, that have been "puffed" as infallible cures; or they have believed the flattering predictions of cunning fortune-tellers and astrologers. But, in the things of this world, *experience* soon detects such impostors or vain fancies. Time shows, in the issue, that what men believed to have happened did not happen, and what they expected to occur did not occur. Pretenders to infallibility in religion have this advantage (if it is to be reckoned one) over other quacks, that the mischief which they do cannot be fully known till the great Day. They make promises about the unseen world, and the victims of their deceit cannot come back from the grave to warn others.

Hence, the belief in infallible guidance is much more common in religious matters than in the affairs of this world. And (you will observe) in religious matters themselves, infallible guidance is much more confidently claimed for *points of belief* and articles of faith, than for moral conduct.

The Roman-catholics themselves do not generally pretend to have infallible guidance in matters of moral conduct. Their "Casuists" [Divines, who explain what is right to be done in difficult *cases*] talk much about the difference between *mortal* and *venial* sins, and tell us that, though mortal sins deserve everlasting punishment, venial sins do not; yet they cannot determine, with absolute certainty, what sins are mortal, and what venial, or be infallibly sure of the distinction between them, what it really is; because the Church has given them no information.

Again, these Casuists differ greatly among themselves in

their rules of moral conduct; and some tell their disciples that they may safely, and even laudably, do things, which others (in the same infallible Church) declare to be detestable wickedness.

And it is curious to observe that, where Popes or Councils *have* determined about moral conduct, *there*, and in such cases, many Roman-catholics refuse to be guided by them. The Popes, for example, have over and over again assumed the power of absolving subjects from their oaths of allegiance, and have stirred them up to rebel against their lawful sovereigns; yet many Roman-catholics own that it is impious blasphemy to pretend that the Pope has any such power. Here, then, it is plain that men are forced to use their private judgments, not only *without*, but *against* the decisions of the highest authority in their Church.

Again, both Popes and Councils, and all the bishops and clergy of the Roman-catholic Church, for whole centuries together, inculcated the persecution of heretics, as a plain *duty*. They excited the princes of Europe to destroy heretics with fire and sword, as the enemies of Christ,—of Him who came “not to destroy men’s lives, but to save them;”—and they praised and rewarded those princes who were most forward in that work, and made the most bloody massacres of their subjects, when those subjects chanced to be heretics. And the duty of persecuting heretics is plainly laid down in the Canon Law, which is the public law of the Roman-catholic Church: nor has any Pope or Council ever, in the least degree, shown any disposition to retract any of the declarations made in former times on that subject. On the contrary, the very last Pope, Gregory XVI., expressly condemned toleration as a most sinful practice; and the present Pope seems to use all his influence to prevent the toleration of Protestants, wherever it can be *safely* prevented.

Now, if persecution be not a *duty*, it is plainly a very great *sin*. Those Roman-catholics, therefore, who do not believe that they are *bound* (when they have the power) to persecute Protestants, must confess that the Popes and prelates of their Church have been for ages together exhorting men to commit a *sin*, contrary to Christ’s will, and in direct opposition to the leading of that blessed spirit of love and meekness which was

given to guide the faithful into "all the Truth." They must acknowledge that, in this most important matter, they have been left to the guidance of their own private judgment, and, in the exercise of their private judgment, have discovered the highest Authorities of their Church to have fallen into grievous error; and *that* not in a point of mere speculative faith, but of practice.

Now, surely no one will say that errors in mere belief are of more consequence than errors of practice,—that *believing* wrongly, is a more shocking crime than *acting* wrongly. On the contrary, the only reasons why belief can be said to be (morally) right or wrong are—1, Because it is in our power to *act* so as to guard against error and discover truth; or, 2, Because belief influences the *actions* which spring from it,—right belief leading to virtuous conduct, and wrong belief to the reverse. Mere *belief* is praised or blamed as the *effect*, or *cause* of virtue or vice, as the case may be. Yet we see that the Church was left without any authority, such as all Roman Catholics will agree to count infallible, in matters of practice, even where those matters were of the greatest importance.

But, further, even in points of faith, it plainly never was God's intention to give us such infallible guidance as corrupt human nature craves for. He never gave to Man such a guide as infidels demand, and weak Christians pretend to have,—a guide whose authority should display itself like the sun, which no one who opens his eyes can help seeing,—a guide whose infallibility can be known and trusted, without the trouble of examination, or the risk of mistake.

When our Saviour Himself was upon earth, He was, indeed, an infallible guide. But were no care and examination required for discovering his real character? Was there no danger to any Israelite of mistaking his Messiah for a false prophet?

We know that it was precisely those who refused to examine,—who gave themselves up with an implicit faith to the guidance of their Church, and relied absolutely upon the teaching of their priests and learned men,—it was precisely those persons who would not exercise their private judgment in determining whether or not Jesus was the Messiah,—who rejected and crucified the Lord of glory.

Observe how *naturally* the great body of the Jewish people acted in rejecting our Saviour.

Christ censured the traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees : but the people said, " these are the traditions of our Church, received for many ages back without question; and it is not to be thought that God would have left us to false teaching so long, from the lips of those whom He Himself commissioned to instruct us."

Christ appealed to his miracles : but the Scribes and Pharisees had determined that they were wrought by Beelzebub. He appealed to the Scriptures ; but the people did not venture to judge of the sense of Scripture, and they knew that their teachers explained them otherwise. Have any of the rulers, said they, or of the Pharisees, believed on Him ? They thought themselves safe in following the decision of their Church ; and, therefore, they demanded that He should be put to death, as an impostor and blasphemer. And for the few who did receive Him, it was by boldly exercising their private judgment, by candidly examining the evidence set before them, and by courageously defying the authority of their Church and nation, that they kept themselves innocent from the blood of that " just one."

Again, the Apostles were infallible guides ; yet we do not find that they ever preached the gospel in such a way as to free men from the trouble of examination, or save them from the dangers attending the exercise of private judgment. We do not even find them beginning by proving, first, their own authority, and then requiring men to believe the gospel on their authority. They come forward in the first instance as *witnesses* of the resurrection of Christ.* They work miracles in *Christ's name*, to show the people that *He* was really alive and present with them ; and they reason out of the Scriptures to show that it was foretold that the Messiah should suffer, and rise from the dead !

And as for their own authority, *that*, it is plain, was, in some instances, questioned and doubted by many, in their own lifetime ; and the Apostle Paul is obliged to caution the churches against " false apostles" and " deceitful workers ;" and the Apostle John exhorts believers not to " believe every spirit, but *try* the spirits whether they be of God, because many false teachers are gone out into the world."

Nor again is there any reason to suppose that any of the Apostles was in such a sense infallible as that He *could not*

* Acts, ii. 32 ; iii. 15 ; iv. 20, 33 ; v. 32 ; x. 39, 40, 41.

teach false doctrine. They were, indeed, so guided by the Spirit, as to have the truth clearly revealed to them, so that they always *knew* it themselves; but it does not appear that they were compelled always to *speak* the truth. *Their* infallibility does not seem to have been like that which Roman-catholics ascribe to their Popes, whose decisions they are ready to follow, even when they know them to be personally the worst of men, and perhaps Infidels in their hearts.

The Apostles Peter and Barnabas, for example, were, in one instance, induced by false shame to dissemble the truth which had been revealed to them, and, by the weight of their example, to draw others also into the same fault. Gal. ii. 11—13.

Paul, too, expressly tells the Galatians, that if he himself were to preach any other Gospel to them than that which they had already received, they should not listen to him; so that, even in the case of the Apostles, men were bound to exercise their own judgments, and not required blindly to receive everything they said; but when they spoke as witnesses, to consider the proofs of their integrity; when they reasoned, to examine their reasoning; when they published Revelations, to weigh well the miraculous evidence of God's speaking in them.

Even in the first setting up of the Church, then, when there *were* infallible living guides on earth, Christians were not exempted from the duty of examination, and from the risks and difficulties attending on it. But, on the contrary, those who were disposed to shrink from the danger and difficulty of judging for themselves, found, no doubt, many plausible excuses for not attending to the evidence laid before them. The Pagans said, that "their religion was the old one,—the faith of their forefathers, which had covered the earth with beautiful temples and splendid rites, and under which the Roman empire had been always happy and prosperous; and that all the world were agreed in condemning this upstart sect, which had lately appeared, and sought to change everything that was hitherto established." The Jews said, that "they followed their Priests, who had an unbroken succession from Aaron, who was expressly called of God; and that they would not listen to men who charged their rulers with murder and blasphemy, and who sought 'to change the customs which Moses had delivered to them.'"^{*} Thus

^{*} "We are Moses' disciples: we know that God spake unto Moses; but as for this man, we know not whence he is."—John ix. 28, 29.

Pagans and Jews refused to examine, and adhered to the *authority* of their teachers, rather than run the risk of exercising their "private judgment."

You see, then, that, in order to believe the Christian religion itself, men are required to examine evidence and exercise judgment; and that, however *we* might wish to be directed infallibly to the true religion, without any trouble or risk, God has not been pleased to comply with such wishes. There is no question on which mankind are more divided than this—*which* is the true religion? And even up to this time, the great majority of mankind have *not* determined the Christian religion to be the true one. And they have, for the most part, been led to determine against *it*, and in favour of some other, by refusing to examine, and trusting to the authority of the *guides* next at hand.

Now a man must be a Christian first, before he can even raise the question—whether there *is* an infallible Church?—And, if he decides that there *must be* one, because it is incredible that God should leave men to the hazard and difficulties of examination, and private judgment,—he is plainly deciding *for* an infallible *christian* Church on grounds inconsistent with believing that there is any christian Church at all.

But we are not only *compelled* to judge for ourselves as to the truth of Christianity, but also as to the claims of different persons and parties to be the infallible guides we seek. And, as for these, observe the self-contradiction into which men blindly run. Certain passages of Scripture are alleged as implying that a certain church is the infallible guide appointed by Providence to supersede our private judgment, which is incapable of deciding aright as to the meaning of Scripture. But how am I to know that such is the true sense of such passages?—If we *are* competent to judge of their meaning, then our alleged unfitness for judging, and the necessity thence inferred, are done away. If we are *not* competent to judge of the meaning of any doubtful passages, then, though we may admit the necessity of an unerring interpreter, we can never be sure that we have found one. Thus men are supposed incapable of determining whether Scripture teaches that Jesus Christ is to be adored, and yet capable of determining between the rival claims of the Greek and Roman churches. Men are supposed incapable of determining from Scripture or Tradition, or reason, whether public

prayers should be said in an unknown tongue, and yet capable of determining whether the Pope—or a General Council—or the whole body of the Bishops—or the whole body of the Faithful, be the infallible guide which Christ left to his Church.

For, Roman-catholics themselves are not agreed as to who that guide is. Many say, that the Pope is that guide; yet Dr. Delahogue, for example, in a book used as a text-book in some Roman-catholic colleges, goes so far as to say;—"If (which God forbid!) the Pope, even teaching authoritatively, and as the Head of the Church, (*ex cathedra*,) should *err*, yet the visible centre of teaching would not fail, but would continue in the Roman See, considered as representing the whole line of the successors of Peter, who *have professed* the sound doctrine received from him; which doctrine becomes in a certain manner the property of the Roman See which they held. And if the Roman Church itself should adhere to its Pope, a visible centre of Doctrine would still exist in the body of the chief pastors of the Church, which might make itself conspicuous by a solemn declaration, such as took place *against the will of the Popes*, in the Council of Constance. . . . Furthermore it is to be noted that the centre of Unity, *though necessary to the Church*, may be interrupted, so far as thereby all catholics are held in the same visible bond of communion. For, *during the forty years of the great Schism of the West*, the various competitors for the Popedom had, each, catholics in obedience to him, and *each excommunicated all who were not his adherents*. But how *none of these parties were schismatical* we have shown already."*

Men, however, are so eager to attain certainty that they shut their eyes to the doubtfulness of the very authority on which they rely; as if a seaman were to hope to make the ship steady by casting anchor on a floating plank.

Again, the alleged necessity is, for an infallible Interpreter of Christ's will universally and readily *accessible*. And this no Church can even pretend to have provided. Supposing a central infallible Church to exist, it is not one Christian in ten thousand that can put himself in direct communication with its supreme governors. Each member of the Church may, indeed, use its formularies, and may assign to them the same authority as to Scripture; but he can be no more competent

* *Tractatus de Ecclesiâ*, p. 393. Dublin, 1815.

to interpret the one than the other, or to supply aright any omissions. He is still in want of an infallible guide to direct him how to conform with unerring exactness to his Church.

The Council of Trent, for example, has determined that "*due* honour should be paid to Images:" but the question is, what honour is *due*?—Now, some Roman-catholics maintain that men are bound to render the *same honour** to an Image as would be due to the person whose Image it is; others, that we should only render the Image an *inferior* kind of honour. How, then, is an unlearned Roman-catholic to discover the true meaning of the Council in this decree? It is plain that he requires, for that purpose, some infallible Interpreter of what the Council has said. And this guide must be, to the great mass of mankind, the *pastor*, under whom each is placed. The pastor's conformity to the Church must be taken on his own word. If, *he* be either ignorant or erroneous, or dishonest,—if, in short, every single pastor be not himself infallibly secured against ignorance and error, and *compelled* also to speak the Truth which he knows,—the Christian people, whose incompetency has been all along presupposed, may be as much misled as in their perusal of the Scriptures.

But if it be said, that such mistakes are *necessary* evils, and that the people are blameless, since they *intend* to believe as the Church believes, and only err from want of information;—that is confessing, that the people do not absolutely need *infallible* guidance, and that no more is required of them, than to do their best, which, after all, is just what Protestants do.†

Since God, then, has not given us such direction as this craving after Infallibility demands, those who hold that such guidance is absolutely necessary, will be driven—if they follow out their principles—into Infidelity, and even into Atheism.

* Vasquez. *Thes.* iii. *Disput.* 108, Art. 3, c. 9. See on the other side, Bellarmine *de Imag.* L. ii. c. 24.

† There occurs, in a late number of the *Edinburgh Review* (April 1850), a remark which one may find also in the mouths of many, and in the minds of very many more; that the great diversity of religious opinions prevailing in the world, and the absence of all superhuman provision against them, is a proof that it is the *will* of the Almighty that such should be the case;—that men were *designed* to hold all diversities of religious belief. Now, the inference which will naturally be drawn, on further reflection, from this is, that it is no matter whether we hold truth or falsehood; and next, that there is *no* truth at all in *any* religion.

But this is not all. The same reasoning would go to prove, that since there is no infallible and universally-accessible guide in *morals*, and men greatly differ in their judgments of what is morally right and wrong, hence we are to infer that God did not

They will be driven to deny the truth of the Christian religion, when they see that Christ has not provided for his Church any such infallible Interpreter, as they think necessary to a divine Revelation. And then, when they see that neither in natural religion, nor in the affairs of life, has God given men such certainty as they think He *ought* to have afforded, they will be driven to deny the very existence of God.

Numbers there are, however, no doubt, who do not follow out such principles to their consequences; many, from habitual want of reflection, and the absence of mental cultivation; and others from resolutely abstaining from all reasoning and all investigation, because they have determined to be believers, and consider their faith to be both the more praiseworthy, and also the more secure, the less they reflect and examine. *They* dread the very danger just mentioned,—that Reasoning will lead to infidelity; and they seek to avoid this danger, not by discarding the false principle from which that notion sets out, but by shunning all reasoning, and stifling all inquiry and reflection.

But this freedom from all uneasy doubt,—a desire for which creates that craving for infallibility,—this, after all, is not always attained by such a procedure. A lurking suspicion will often remain,—which a man vainly endeavours to stifle—that the *foundation* is not sound. The building, indeed, may be complete. Once granted that the church, sect, party, or leader, we have taken as our guide is perfectly infallible, and there is an end of all doubts and cares respecting particular points. But an uneasy doubt will sometimes haunt a man,—in spite of his efforts to repress it, and however strenuously he may deny, even to himself, its existence,—whether the infallibility claimed, which is the foundation of the whole building, be itself really

design men to agree on this point neither, and that it matters not whether we *act* on right or wrong principles; and, in short, that there is no such thing as right and wrong; but only what each man thinks. The two opposite errors (as we think them) from the *same source*, are, “If God wills all men to believe and to act rightly, He must have given us an infallible and accessible guide for belief and practice. (1.) But he does so will; therefore, there is such a guide: and (2.) He has *not* given us any such guide; therefore, He does not will all men to believe and act rightly.”

Now this is to confound the two senses of *WILL*, as distinguished in the concluding paragraph of the 17th Article. In a certain sense, the most absurd errors and the most heinous crimes may be said to be according to the Divine will; since God does not interpose his omnipotence to prevent them. But “in our doings,” says that Article, “that will of God is to be followed which we have *expressly* declared in Holy Writ.”

well established. A suspicion will occasionally cross the mind, however strenuously repelled, "Is THERE NOT A LIE IN MY RIGHT HAND?" And the reluctance often shown to examine the foundation, and ascertain whether it is really sound, is an indication, not of full confidence in its firmness, but of a lurking suspicion that it will not bear examining.

As for those who do *not* allege the *necessity* of an infallible guide as a reason for believing that there *is* one, but who ground their belief in the Church's infallibility upon what seems to them the meaning of Scripture, or the evidence of tradition, we may consider their arguments hereafter. But, in the meanwhile, *they* would do well to consider what follows.

A ship was about to sail for a certain harbour without the captain who had been usually the commander, but who was then called to serve elsewhere. He came on board to take leave, and to warn the officers and others of the dangerous rocks and shoals which, to his knowledge, beset the entrance; exhorting them to keep a good look-out, and also to inquire carefully into the character of any *pilot* who might offer his services; as some, he was certain, were in league with *wreckers*, and would purposely steer the ship on rocks, that these wretches might plunder the wreck. And if we were told, that all this time there was, *to his knowledge*, a *lighthouse* erected there as a sure landmark; and a ship *could* not go wrong, that did but steer straight for that; should we not at once exclaim that, since *he said not a word* of this, he must be either a fool or a knave. And, on being assured that he was an eminently wise and good man, and thoroughly well-informed, we should say,—“Then this story of the lighthouse must be a fiction.”

And now look at Paul's farewell (Acts, xx. 29—31) to the elders at Miletus.

Does he promise them that the *primitive* Church shall be safe from the danger of being misled?—that no inroads of error will take place for the first three or four centuries? On the contrary, he speaks of the danger as immediate.

Or does he tell them that they will find their safety in apostolical succession?—that it is miraculously provided that no teacher shall ever mislead them, who has but been regularly ordained by himself, or by those appointed by him to succeed him in the office of ordaining? On the contrary, he warns the

Elders that even from the midst of their own Body,—“of their own selves,—will arise men teaching a perverted Gospel to draw away the disciples after them.”

Or again, does he tell them that when any point of doubt and difficulty arises, they are to find safety in making a reference to Peter, and to those who shall be divinely appointed from time to time as his successors and representatives, for infallible decisions and directions? Not a word is said of any Apostle but himself; or of any one who should succeed him in the apostolic office. To himself, during his life, they would naturally apply by letter, if opportunity offered, for directions in any case of doubt that might arise. But not even any Apostle,—much less any successor of an Apostle,—is mentioned by Paul as the oracular guide, whom, after his own death, they were to consult.

Or, does he bid them resort to some central Church,—whether at Jerusalem, or at Rome, or at Byzantium,—and seek there for infallible guidance?

Or, does he direct them to summon a General Council, and refer every question that may arise to the decision of a majority of its votes; with a full assurance that these should be so supernaturally overruled by the Holy Spirit as to secure them from the possibility of error?

No: he makes no allusion whatever to any other Church or Prelate; to any successor of Peter, or of the other Apostles; or to any infallible Council, as their guide. But he tells them to TAKE HEED TO THEMSELVES and to the flock they are set over: he tells them to “*watch* ;” and he exhorts them to remember his own earnest warnings to them.

Now, if there *had* been provided by the Most High, any such safeguard as we have alluded to,—if Paul had known of any Order of men, any Prelate, any particular Church, or General Council, designed by Providence as an infallible guide, and a sure remedy against errors and corruptions, would he not have been sure on such an occasion as this, to have given notice of it to his hearers? If, when he foresaw a perilous navigation for the vessel of the Church, he had known of a safe port, just at hand, and readily accessible, is it credible that he would have never alluded to it, but have left them exposed to the storms? Would he have been, in that case, “pure,”—as he declares he

was,—“from the blood of all men”? Can any one seriously think, that against the dangers which he had been warning them of, and weeping over, for three years, he knew of a complete safeguard and yet was so wanting in his duty,—so careless of their well-being,—as never to make the slightest mention of anything of the kind? To suppose this would be to suppose him destitute not only of all faithfulness in his high office, but of common prudence and rationality.

And yet if any such provision really had been made by the Author of our faith, it is utterly inconceivable that the Apostle Paul should have been—and that too on such an occasion as this,—left in utter ignorance of its existence. Whatever may be the precise meaning of our Lord's promise, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,” it is at least perfectly clear what it could *not* mean : it could not relate to something either unknown to Paul, or kept back by him from his hearers. All that he knew, and that it was for their benefit to learn, he had, as he solemnly declares, taught to them ; and this was no less he assures them, than “the whole counsel and design of God.” “I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.”

April, 1851.

No. VII.

“How did these nations serve their gods? even so will we,”—DEUT. xii. 30.

HERE is a fresh bundle of Roman-catholic Tracts, a continuation of those noticed in Caution IV., and it may not be amiss to give you some account of them. To us they appear extremely important; not as containing *strong arguments*,—very much the reverse,—but as the *best* that can be urged by the *ablest* of their writers.

Only, before we begin, let us beg of you not to be offended at seeing some rather silly things put in their true light, as if sacred matters were laughed at, when some folly that has been *forced into connexion* with them is exposed. When things really ridiculous are mixed up with religion, who is to be blamed? Not he who shows that they *are* ridiculous, and no parts of religion, but those who disfigure truth by blending falsehood with it. It is true, indeed, that to attack even error in religion with *mere* ridicule, is no wise act; because good things may be ridiculed as well as bad. But it surely cannot be our duty to abstain from showing plainly that absurd things *are* absurd, merely because people cannot help smiling at them. A tree is not injured by being cleared of moss and lichens; nor truth, by having folly or sophistry torn away from around it.

Some well-meaning people, however, are scandalized even at a *familiar illustration*, when used on religious subjects. They cannot understand a comparison between two *cases* but as a comparison between the *things* spoken of. Such persons would do well to reflect upon our Lord's parables, in which the most familiar objects are taken to furnish a comparison with sacred matters. Yet, He, surely, did not mean that Christians are literally *like* fishes, and fig-trees, and sheep, and goats, &c. Such parables, if met with as *new*, and by an unknown author, would, very likely, be called *profane* by many. But those who censured them would be labouring under a confusion of thought.

And the truth is, that many persons can hardly be made to understand the weakness or force of an argument, but by applying it to some *familiar case* in common life, and showing them how that case resembles something in religion.

Let us then, without further preface, turn to this "entertaining and instructive library" of Roman-catholic pamphlets. "Old Stones tell Tales," is a pleasant dialogue between Thomas, the carpenter, who is a Protestant, and (of course) very ignorant, and John, the mason, who is a Roman Catholic, and (of course) intelligent and well-informed.

The dialogue shows very well how easily a simple ignorant man may be imposed upon and misled by a clever one. *That* was not indeed, what the writer *meant* to show; but you will find that it is the real upshot of the matter.

Thomas and John are talking about the old church of St. Mary, Redcliffe, at Bristol. The carpenter (poor man!) had fancied that our forefathers were always Protestants; and he is much struck with the information that they were Roman Catholics at first, and that it was a Roman-catholic mayor of Bristol who built that fine old church.

Just so, the ignorant Roman peasants fancy that their forefathers were always subject to the Popes, and that the Pantheon, and the Coliseum, and many other splendid old buildings, were erected by Christians; and if they were told that those noble edifices were raised by their *Pagan* ancestors, and that the Christians took possession of them, and often rose in disorderly mobs to pull down the beautiful statues, and break them in pieces, *they*, too, would probably be much surprised. And they would very likely wonder (further) why the Idols should have been broken, when they might have been turned so easily into Saints.

However, Thomas forthwith begins to think that these Roman Catholics (since they were our ancestors, and built such fine churches) must have been a good sort of people; but he is puzzled at remembering that some persons have told him that the monks were idle drones, who deserved to have their convents pulled down. Idle *Protestant* drones, he must mean, since he thought that all our forefathers were Protestants; but now he is taught better; for John informs him that, though the people had few books then, yet the monks and clergy exerted them-

selves so well, that *all* "men, women, and children, *knew their religion*, and there was no dispute about it as there is now."

Such a statement as this might be excused in a mason; but the author of this tract is no mason.

Of *what* times, do you think, is this gentleman speaking? Of the times of the barons' wars—of the times when Jack Straw and Wat Tyler led a savage *socialist* mob to London, swearing that they would kill any man who could read and write—of the times when men rode on such pilgrimages to Canterbury as Chaucer has described—the times when that monster of iniquity, Alexander VI., was Bishop of Rome—the times of the great schism of the West—the times which every pious and enlightened Roman-catholic looks back upon with sorrow, and remembers with shame. Listen how the famous Roman-catholic bishop, Bossuet, describes the happy times before the Reformation, when all *men knew their religion*.

"A Reformation of ecclesiastical discipline had been desired several ages since. 'Who will grant me,' says St. Bernard, 'before I die, to see the church of God such as she had been in the primitive times?' . . . Disorders had still increased since his time. The Roman Church . . . was not exempt from the evil; and, from the time of the Council of Vienne, a great prelate, commissioned by the Pope to prepare matters there to be discussed, laid it down as a groundwork to that holy assembly, 'to reform the Church in the HEAD and the MEMBERS.' . . . The disorders of the clergy, chiefly those of Germany, were represented in this manner to Eugenius IV. by Cardinal Julian. 'These disorders excite the hatred of the people against the whole ecclesiastical order, and should they not be corrected, it is to be feared lest the laity, like the Hussites, should rise against the clergy, as they loudly threaten us. . . . When they shall no longer have any hopes of our amendment,' continued this great Cardinal, 'then will they fall upon us. . . . The rancour they have imbibed against us becomes manifest; they will soon think it an agreeable sacrifice to God to abuse and rob ecclesiastics, as abandoned to extreme disorders, and hateful to God and man.'"—*History of Variations*, b. i., c. 1.

This is pretty strong; but he might have cited even stronger testimonies. "The Church of God," says Bernard, "every day finds by sad experience in what danger she is, *when the Shep-*

herd knows not where the pastures are, nor the guide where the right way is, and when that very man who should speak for God, and on his side, is ignorant what is the will of his master." Nicholas de Clemangis, another Roman-catholic writer of those times, speaks thus: "The church that Jesus Christ has chosen for his spouse without spot and blemish, is in these days a warehouse of ambition and business, of theft and rapine. The Sacraments and all Orders, even to those of the priests, are exposed to sale. They sell pardons of sins, masses, and the very administration of our Lord's body." And further, he declares, that "the study of the Holy Scriptures, and those who taught them, were generally derided," and that the "bishops themselves were the foremost to scoff at them."

If all the people, men, women, and children, in those days, *knew their religion*, it must have been a curious religion which they knew.

"Well, but at any rate there were no disputes then about religion as there are now, since the Reformation has brought sects and heresies into the church."

On the contrary, there never was such a swarm of sects in the world as then prevailed. Not to speak of Wycliffe, and Huss, and Jerome of Prague, and the Waldenses, who were endeavouring to reform the church, there were strange sects and heresies without end, such as have scarce ever been heard of since the Reformation—so wild in their opinions, and so abominable in their practice. There were Manicheans, and Fratricelli, and Turlupins, and Brethren of the Free Spirit, and Apostolicals, and myriads more besides; and though the Church of Rome bestirred itself to the utmost to put down these sects by fire and sword, massacreing them often by thousands at a time, yet it could never wholly root them out; because the ignorance of the people left them open to be imposed upon by crafty and fanatical teachers.

Let not Roman Catholics then pretend that it is the reading of the Scriptures that has brought in wild and extravagant sects among us; they had a thousand times wilder sects among themselves long before the Reformation; and though we have many differences amongst us, yet our old extravagant sects have either soon become quiet and rational, or else quite disappeared; and the new ones do not, generally, rely on *Scripture*, at all, but

(like the Southcotians and Mormonites) on *new Revelations*. Now, as for new Revelations, the Church which sanctions the Revelations of St. Brigit, and St. Simon Stock, and St. Catharine, has no right to laugh at Protestants as enthusiasts when they talk of such things.

Bear ever in mind, then, that the system of the Romish Church is an *experiment that has been tried, and that has failed*. That system was in full work for five centuries before the Reformation, and the result was, that things were going on every day from bad to worse, till at last, by the confession of Romanists themselves, a general corruption spread itself over the whole body of the Church, "both in the head and in the members." Do not be deceived, then, by the plausible appearance which that system may wear *amongst you* at present. Every adroit aim at despotism, spiritual or civil, *begins* mildly, and does not use the whip and spur till he is firm in the saddle, and has the bit in the horse's mouth. The first converts to Romanism will be treated gently,—their scruples will be respected, and "things will be made easy to them." The first nunneries will perhaps be made real good schools, and charitable institutions. The first teachers will be really learned men, and will teach—only, on *human* authority—much that we believe on divine. The first confessors will say nothing but what is proper, and will give wholesome advice. But let England be once wholly Roman-catholic, and that Church's authority well established—and then the cloven-foot will appear. Your case will be like that of Sinbad the Sailor, who let a meek-looking, venerable old man get upon his shoulders, and then found that it was not easy to shake him off. An iron tyranny will be fixed upon your consciences; the nunneries will become, as they were before the Reformation, full of abominations; your teachers will be ignorant and debauched priests; the confessional will be abused to the vile purposes of sedition and impurity; and England will need a second Reformation to lift the heavy burden from its neck.

You see, then, that honest "John the mason" went beyond his rule when he told the poor Protestant joiner that every one "knew his religion" before the Reformation, and that there were "no disputes" in those happy times. The carpenter should have remembered that, in dealing with Roman-catholic con-

vertists, he was *meddling with edge-tools*, and have been more on his guard than he seems to have been.

However, Thomas rallies at last, and (to do him justice) puts one shrewd question :—How came it that these people, who knew their religion so well, and were so happy in it, allowed it to be changed? And John replies, that the king at first promised to make the church-lands serve instead of taxes; and the hope of being freed from taxes had such charms for Englishmen, that they gave up their churches and monasteries for that.

Now, is not this a fine flattering picture of our Roman-catholic forefathers? They “knew their religion,” every man, woman, and child of them; so that they could not plead ignorance (like silly Protestants) in excuse. “Rich and poor went together to the same church on Sundays and holidays, and every one went to communion,” (being, indeed, *forced* to do so, as John might have added, at least once a year,) and yet they were content to give up their fine churches and monasteries to be eased of taxes, not one quarter as heavy as those we bear now! And they only began to show discontent when they found that the king did not stand to his bargain! Why, the very heathens would scorn such baseness as that.

John, indeed, himself seems to feel that this account of the matter is not quite satisfactory, and therefore he adds, that heretical teachers had got among the people (well-instructed as they had been), and told them that “every man had a right to judge for himself in matters of religion. *And so* they went on from lesser things to greater; and many lost their respect for the old faith :”—a natural consequence, it seems, of judging for oneself in matters of religion!

Now, if some of John’s acquaintance were to say, by way of recommending him, that those of his friends who believed most firmly in his honesty believed it on his own word, while those who had ventured to judge for themselves of his character *had come to the conclusion that he was a rogue*,—do you think he would be very grateful for such “backing” as that?

Yet poor Thomas (simple soul!) is perfectly satisfied with this explanation. Nor does it occur to him to ask—“If people have no right to judge for themselves in matters of religion, what business have you arguing with me against Protestantism, or I

was greatly mistaken, and "knew his religion" but imperfectly after all. There are great disputes among their most learned theologians about what they call "Divine Faith," and the proper way of "resolving" it. And, as for the Sacraments, there is no end of their differences about them;—what is the true meaning of "*opus operatum*;"—how the Sacraments "contain grace;"—what sort of "character" they imprint upon the receiver;—what dispositions are impediments to their working;—what sort of intention is required in the minister, &c.

You will say, perhaps, "these are not *practical* questions." On the contrary, some of them are of great practical importance. For example, it is of great moment for a man to know exactly what sort of repentance is *necessary* to obtain the pardon of his sins; and yet this is one of the points on which the Romish Divines are not agreed.

Then, is it not a *practical* question, whether the efficacy of the Sacraments depends on the real inward *intention* of the minister? For, if it does (as some of their greatest Divines maintain), how can a Roman-catholic be sure, when he worships the host, that he is not worshipping a mere bit of bread; since the priests may not have *intended* to consecrate it? Or how can he know that he was really baptized? or that the Pope himself is a true priest,—or so much as a baptized Christian? Yet this too is a question on which the ablest and most learned Roman-catholic Theologians are not agreed.

On the other hand, though we are not all agreed about the meaning of the word "Faith," in certain texts (some taking it for "Trust," some for "Fidelity," some for "sincere belief," some for "Belief with its proper effects," &c.) yet we are all agreed that all these things are necessary to salvation; that a man cannot be saved except he *trust* in Christ, and have a *sincere belief* in the Gospel, *producing the fruits of righteousness*.

And, though we are not all agreed what Baptismal Regeneration means in the case of an infant, yet we all agree to baptize children; and, as for grown-up persons (which is the practical point to *us*), we have no doubt but that they cannot enjoy the benefits promised in baptism without faith and repentance. There are really *fewer* practical differences amongst us than amongst them.

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behaviour of some of our congregations; which behaviour is, indeed, very much to be lamented. But if John had ever gone abroad, and seen some of the congregations in some Roman-catholic Churches on the Continent, he would not have been so forward to laugh at us. Those who live in glass-houses should not throw stones.

Meanwhile, let us just remark, that an appearance of great devotion in saying prayers is no proof that the persons who seem so *devout* are truly *religious*. The robbers and loose women in Italy are known to be very *devout* in their own way. So was Louis XI. in France, and our Harry VIII., and many others; and surely, nothing can exceed the *devotion* of those who fling themselves to be crushed under the car of Juggernaut.

But careless and superstitious persons may be found everywhere. The true question is, whether the carelessness of some Protestants *springs from their religion*, or from neglect of it? John's account of the matter is, that "everything about the Established Church is so formal, so sober, so decent, so respectable. It would look so odd to seem in earnest, to be on your knees in prayer *before so many well-dressed people*." From which one may gather, that we shall never get on well till we turn all well-dressed people out of our churches. Otherwise, we shall feel ashamed to "kneel down" in their presence, while *kneeling* is quite essential to devotion; though the poor ignorant primitive Christians never *knelt down* in Church on a Sunday,* and some even thought it a matter of great importance to pray *standing* on the Lord's day, as a token that we are now *justified*, and freed from slavish dread, by Christ's resurrection.

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"I give thee hearty thanks, O Death!—Death, the stern punisher of human pride!—that thou hast delivered me from the terrors of the threatening Orcus [which is the Pagan name

simple truth in simple words, such as a plain man can understand," their teaching consisting chiefly in "a score or two of texts,"—such as these :

"The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live righteously, soberly, and godly, in this present world, looking for the blessed hope, and glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour, Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." (Titus, ii. 11—14.)

"There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all." (1 Tim. v. 3.)

"Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." (Matth. vi. 10.)

"This is my commandment, that ye should love one another, as I have loved you." (John, xii. 13.)

"Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." (Coloss. iii. 13.)

"Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; bless them which persecute you; bless and curse not." (Rom. xii. 9—14.)

Are not these "simple truths in simple words, such as a plain man can understand?" or can the Church of Rome tell them better and more intelligibly? If she can, it is no wonder that she does not put the Scriptures into men's hands, when she can teach so much more clearly in her own way. But then John should have spoken out, and said, that neither Protestants, *nor the Apostles and Evangelists* could tell a simple truth in simple words; and then no one could have mistaken his right meaning.

But another reason why we of the Established Church cannot *teach* religion is, because we are not all agreed upon some points respecting Faith and Baptism. But did John really suppose that all the teachers of his own Church are quite agreed about all things relating to Faith and the Sacraments? If he did, he

was greatly mistaken, and "knew his religion" but imperfectly after all. There are great disputes among their most learned theologians about what they call "Divine Faith," and the proper way of "resolving" it. And, as for the Sacraments, there is no end of their differences about them;—what is the true meaning of "*opus operatum*;"—how the Sacraments "contain grace;"—what sort of "character" they imprint upon the receiver;—what dispositions are impediments to their working;—what sort of intention is required in the minister, &c.

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of Hell] having overtaken me *living well*. Thou art not evil, but like Mercury [a Heathen god] in the stars, and like a chameleon on earth. Thou art black to the dark, and clear to the bright."

What would John have said if he had found such profane nonsense in a Protestant church? Yet there it was, as we are told, in the sacristy of St. Peter's Church, at Rome, in the year 1836.

The end of the matter is, that Thomas is quite satisfied that Roman-catholics at least "know something for certain about God;" which seems to him all the same as *their being certain* that they know their religion. He sees that they are *confident*, and from that he concludes that they must be *right*. But if Thomas had ever called in, at the same time, a quack and a regular physician in a difficult case, he would have found the quack boasting much more of *certainty*, pretending to *know* much more about the disease, and promising a cure much more *confidently*, than the regular physician. Yet which would a reasonable man chuse to employ?

And as for professing to "know a great deal about the other world," the Swedenborgians beat us all out hollow. We Protestants pretend to no more knowledge than the little that God has told us. The Pope boasts of some more. He can tell you about Purgatory, and Limbus Patrum, and a great many other curious places, some of which (according to him) you are likely enough to visit one of these days yourself, and out of which you will not easily get, unless you pay the priests to pray for you. But the Swedenborgians can tell more again than he; and (what is more) they can *show* you the other world now, and that, too, without charging a single penny for the exhibition. If, therefore, you are very curious about such things, and long to be "told about them," without caring much whether what you are told be true or false, by all means turn Swedenborgian without delay.

Then, as for the argument that there *must be* a Purgatory *because very few* can be fit, let them "die ever so well," to go straight to heaven, and see God—surely this gentleman must know that, according to the best Roman-catholic divines, the souls in Purgatory are not *made better* and more holy there, but only quit the score of *punishment* which they have not yet paid

in this life—as we have remarked already in Caution V. Part 1. So that, according to that view of the matter, a man will not go to Purgatory, but to a worse place, unless he has enough of inward holiness “to go straight to heaven, and see God.”

Indeed, if the pains of purgatory are *needful* to make men *fit* for heaven, why does the Pope give such indulgences as the following—which he gave the other day to a gentleman at Rome?—

“A. B., casting himself humbly at the feet of your Holiness, seeks a plenary indulgence in the moment of death, to be obtained by himself, *by his kin to the fourth degree*, as also *twenty other persons*, to be named by the petitioner.”

To which the Pope subscribed thus:—

“We assent to the petition,

“PIUS IX., Chief Pontiff,

“23 March, 1851.”*

Now, then, does the Pope send men to heaven before they are *fit* to go there? Or can *he* make them fit to go “straight to heaven,” without suffering the pains of Purgatory? If so, may not God Almighty do as much as the Pope?

Then, as for the profitableness of prayers for the dead, the text which John quotes is not out of the Bible, but out of the Apocryphal Second Book of Maccabees; and that text speaks of prayers for persons who had died in the *mortal sin* of idolatry, while the Church of Rome teaches that our prayers cannot profit those who die in *mortal sin*!

Yet with this passage out of a foolish old Jewish book, which says not one word of Purgatory, and praises as “profitable,” prayers which they think *unprofitable*, they try to persuade people to leave money for masses to get their souls out of Purgatory; and, thanks to men’s superstitious hopes and fears, they succeed. But how many of the masses paid for are *really said* is another question.

It is well known, for example, that, in 1723, Pope Innocent

* Humillime provolutus ante pedes Sanctitatis Tuæ, petit A. B. indulgentiam plenariam in Articulo Mortis, lucrandam a se et a suis consanguineis usque ad quartum gradum, necnon pro viginti aliis personis, a petitore nominandis.

Annuimus juxta petita,

PIUS NONUS, P.M.

23 Martii. 1851.

XIII., by a single letter, exempted a vast number of friars from the obligation of saying continual daily masses for certain souls in Purgatory, which they had *omitted* till the arrear became enormous; and allowed them to say instead one grand annual mass, retaining all the while the money which had been paid for the perpetual masses; and, for the rest, he allowed them to take the present market price of masses as the measure of their obligations. So that the poor souls who had made a good bargain, and bought one hundred perpetual masses when they were cheap, thinking the contract was always to stand good, received only fifty when the market-price was doubled!*

It would seem, then, that the pains of Purgatory are not *absolutely necessary* either for satisfying the divine justice, or for improving the souls of the departed, but only for bringing in money to the Church; and that the Pope, with a stroke of his pen, can do a great deal towards sending one "straight to heaven;" much more than could be accomplished by "*dying* ever so well," which is the chief thing John seems to think of. The "*living* ever so well" is surely of somewhat more importance.

But the great charm which the doctrine of Purgatory has for many is the hope of being able to make up for a careless life by suffering there—especially as they think that the pains of it may be lightened greatly by the prayers of their friends, and of those whose services they can hire for that purpose. If it had not this ground in corrupt human nature, the texts and flimsy reasons that are brought in support of it would influence very few.

Next we have a tract upon the "Smithfield fires," the object of which is to allay our apprehensions of being roasted alive, if the Roman-catholics should get the upper hand.

Now, observe how this gentleman proceeds. He plainly feels that he has an important point to manage, and is very anxious to free us from our fears; yet he never ventures on the most obvious and effectual way of encouraging us.

Suppose a Socinian were to express apprehensions of being burned alive by our bishops, on the ground that persons of his sentiments were so punished by orthodox Protestants in former times, how would *you* answer him? You would say: "I confess

* De Potter, *Histoire du Christianisme*, vol. v. p. 297.

that in former times, our church, or at least, the chief governors of it, were foolish and wicked enough to do such things; but, thank God! we are wiser now. We detest and renounce the principles and practice of persecution; and, therefore, you need not fear that you will ever be exposed to danger of bodily pain from us on account of your religious sentiments."

That is the way in which a plain straightforward English Protestant would meet such fears and suspicions. It is what we hope you would be ready to say, even in reference to those who are not themselves tolerant.

But that is *not* the way in which this gentleman ventures to meet these suspicions. He never once says that the *principle* of persecuting heretics is wrong. He never once says that the practice of burning men for heresy is, *under all circumstances*, a wicked practice. All he tries to show is, that the Queen and the Pope's legate, and most of the bishops, were, partly from natural humanity, and partly (mark this!) from *motives of policy*, unwilling to go so soon to extremities, but were forced on, against their wills, by violent men in the council and parliament.

Cardinal Pole, the Pope's legate, it seems, declared that "there was a great difference to be made between a nation uninfected, where some few teachers came over to spread errors," [in which case, it would appear, he thought burning the teachers a very proper remedy,*] "and a nation that had been overrun with them, both clergy and laity." He had "seen that severe proceedings did rather inflame than cure the disease." He advised that "the statutes against heresy should be held forth *as a terror* only; but that *no open persecution* should be raised." And this alone, the writer thinks, "ought to convince any reasonable person that [Roman] Catholics are not *bound*, by the very principles of their religion, to *exterminate* the enemies of

* Cardinal Wiseman should think well of this. And the writers and readers of these tracts should consider how Pope Gregory XVI. has denounced that liberty of the press of which they avail themselves. He calls it, in his famous encyclical letter, that "baneful, detestable, and never-to-be-sufficiently-execrated liberty of the book-trade;" and he speaks with horror of the "multitudes of books, pamphlets, and all sorts of publications, *small of size but of immense malice*," which are the result of that liberty. But though these men, on *their own principles*, deserve to be punished and restrained by Protestants, we should not be so weak and wicked as to adopt their unchristian principle of persecution in our conduct towards them. We should do to others, not as we think they would be *likely* to do to us, but as "*we would* that they should do to us." "Use every man after his desert, and who shall 'scape whipping? Use them after your own honour and dignity. The less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty."

the Faith." Not bound under *all circumstances*, he probably means.

Now, perhaps, it may show *that*; but what more does it *show*? Does it show that they are not *bound* to persecute so far as they may think persecution prudent, and effectual for their purposes? Plainly not. Listen how another cardinal, Bellarmine—a Divine of the highest character in the Church of Rome—explains this matter:—"We shall briefly show that incorrigible heretics, especially such as have relapsed, may and *ought* to be rejected by the Church, and punished by the secular power with temporal penalties, and even death itself." He then goes on to prove this position from Scripture, the Fathers, the laws of Church and State, and experience; and finally, he qualifies his position thus:—"We should always consider, according to our Lord's advice, (in the case of heretics, as in that of thieves and other malefactors,) whether the punishment may be inflicted on the evil without injury to the good. If that may be done, *heretics should by all means be exterminated*. If not—either because they are not known—or there is hazard of punishing the innocent for the guilty—or *because they are stronger than we, and there is danger that, in case of war we should suffer the greater loss*, then we ought to keep quiet."*

On such principles, what would be the security of Protestants to-morrow, if the Pope were to gain supreme power in England? Plainly none, but in the fears and prudence of the Roman-catholics. The question would be, as it was (by this author's showing) in Queen Mary's days, a question of *time*, and *policy*, between the violent men and the moderate; and, even as to literal extermination, who is to assure us that the violent counsellors might not (as they did then) carry all their own way?

They *might*, however, be overborne. Pole's advice was, no doubt, the *wisest*. The "fires of Smithfield" disgusted the whole nation, and the martyrs (as Latimer promised) "lit such a candle in England, as, by the grace of God, shall never be put out."

But then, Englishmen have no taste for living on mere sufferance, and being exposed to every kind of persecution short of death. The light of the fires in Smithfield was strong enough to enable us to read the *small print* as well as the *large* of persecution. We can see by them what that principle really is;

* *De Membris Eccl. Milit.*, lib. iii. c. 21.

and that, if persecutors stop short of extermination, it is not because their principles do not justify it, but because circumstances will not allow them to go so far. We have no taste for having "statutes against heresy held over us as a terror;" we do not like the prospect of the "milder correction" which Bonner and Gardiner would have preferred to capital punishment; we cannot please ourselves with the expectation of "being often remanded" in hopes of a *recantation*; and would rather be roasted whole at once, than tortured and tempted to deny our faith by such lingering cruelties. And, if such wholesome and moderate severities as these are all this writer can promise us from the Pope, we tell him plainly, that we should greatly prefer the "fires in Smithfield," bad as they were, to the "tender mercies" of such a government as that of Rome, or Tuscany, or Naples, at the present day. Queen Mary's persecution was a hot fit; too fiery to last long; but the other, though not quite so fierce, is more durable, and keeps wearing away the patient by degrees, until it has made an end of him.

There were two Vaudois [Protestants of Piedmont] pastors, lately at Florence, who converted a considerable number of Roman-catholics. One of these pastors has been *driven away*; the other is either imprisoned somewhere, or else made away with. Of course, our (Roman-catholic) minister at Florence makes no remonstrance. But how would Cardinal Wiseman like us to play at *reprisals*?

Now, certainly, there are many Roman-catholics who detest as heartily as we do, the principle and practice of persecution. And what should be pressed upon them is, to consider how they can reconcile their love of liberty of conscience, with their submission to the Church of Rome. *We* make no scruple to confess that Protestants were wrong, when they persecuted those whom they considered heretics; for our opinions do not hinder us from owning our faults and correcting them. But *if they* grant that their Popes, Councils, and Bishops were wrong in preaching up persecution for so many centuries, what becomes of that infallible guidance of which they boast?

Nor can they escape by saying that the heretics so punished were, for the most part, seditious or otherwise wicked people; since it was not *as seditious* persons, or as offenders against temporal good order, they were punished, but *as heretics*. Many

of the English Protestants may have been rebels; but they were not burned for rebellion, but for *heresy*; and some of them might have had their lives spared, if they would have recanted their religious opinions. Nor could there have been much danger to the public peace from bedridden cripples, youths, women, and babes dropping from their mother's wombs, who were some of the persons burned in Queen Mary's persecution.

So that, on the whole, this author would have acted more wisely in not stirring "Smithfield Fires" again, since he has only burned his fingers in the flame.

Another Tract is on "the Benediction of the most Holy Sacrament;" and the design is to show that we are not justified in *disbelieving* Transubstantiation, merely because we cannot understand *how* it can be true. Perhaps so; but our difficulty is, that we cannot understand *why* we should be called on to believe it. To this question the author only answers by quoting the text, "This is my body;" which has been considered already in No. III—John, vi. 51, where Christ declares that He is "the living bread which came down from heaven;" and (verse 54) "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." But he (prudently) does *not* quote verses 62, 63, "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before? It is the Spirit that quickeneth [giveth life]; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life?"—where our Lord plainly declares that He was *not speaking literally*, when he talked of eating his flesh, but figuratively. Nor does he remark that, elsewhere in that chapter, "eating" is manifestly used in a figurative sense for "believing on" and "coming to;" as you may see from comparing verse 35—"I am the *bread of life*: he that *cometh to me* shall *never hunger*, and he that *believeth on me* shall *never thirst*"—with verses 47—50, "He that *believeth on me* hath *everlasting life*. I am *that bread of life*. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is that bread which came down from heaven, that a man may *eat thereof* and not *die*." And as for our Lord's not having *immediately* explained Himself when the Jews murmured, one might just as well argue that he must have been speaking of literal water. John, iv. 10, because, when the Samaritan woman mis-

took Him, he did not immediately correct her mistake ; or (for a like reason) that He really spoke of Herod's temple, when he said, " Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." John, ii. 19.

Next comes a Tract on the " Rosary ;" the object of which is to show that *repeating* the Lord's Prayer *fifteen* times over, and the " Hail, Mary," *one hundred and fifty*,* is no " vain repetition," because it is *possible* to do so with proper dispositions every time you repeat those words. Perhaps so : but is it easy ? Why, the author tells you himself, " It is by no means an easy thing to *say the Rosary well* ; but we may safely affirm, that any one who *can* do so, has little more to learn in the *science of devotion*." And *therefore*, since the *common illiterate people* are great masters in the " science of devotion," the Rosary is just the thing for them !

Just consider how well these things hang together. And further, reflect that, for the special purpose of guarding against formal long prayers and vain repetitions, our Lord gave his own prayer (which is very short, and has *no repetitions* in it) to his disciples, as a model of ordinary devotion,—and then ask yourselves, would those disciples have been following their Master's advice, if they had *repeated that very prayer* every morning fifteen times over, and added, besides, one hundred and fifty " Hail-Marys" ? This may be safely left to your own common-sense.

As for the beads, *they*, it seems, are only a sort of play-thing—" something to fiddle with," as children say—while repeating your prayers : just as some ill-reared boys have a trick of buttoning and unbuttoning their waistcoats when saying their lessons ; and Locke tells of a gentleman who could not dance, unless a particular trunk lay in a corner of the room.

But if that be all, the old women might much better exercise themselves in " the science of devotion" while knitting stockings. The thing itself would be *useful*, which dropping the beads is not ; and besides, be less apt to be superstitiously abused. They would not as readily think that counting stitches was a religious service, as they do that " telling beads" is praying.

Another Tract, " Protestantism weighed in its own Balance,"

* Does this mean that the Virgin Mary is entitled to just ten times as much veneration as her Maker ?

seems, at first sight, to promise something like argument, and an appeal to Scripture; but a second glance disappoints all one's expectations.

The author makes a man of straw, and calls it Protestantism. He sets it up to show his valour on it, and knocks it down when he pleases. And, at last, when he is tired of the combat, he tramples on it furiously, and leaves it for dead. Meanwhile, however, Protestantism itself has received no hurt. It was only kicked and battered "in effigy;" and that effigy no more like the true thing than the "Guys" which the boys make on the 5th of November are like the real Guido Fawkes.

His argument is this: "You Protestants say that 'the Bible, and the Bible only, is your religion;'—that 'the Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation;'—that 'whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby,' should not be made an article of faith; and yet *you yourselves* believe *more* than the Bible teaches, since it never says that we are to receive nothing beyond its doctrine; and also *less*, since it speaks of the necessity of obeying *living infallible* guides, which you deny."

But this gentleman quite mistakes our meaning all along. When we speak of the "Bible only" as our "Rule of Faith," we do not mean to exclude all help from common sense and human reason, but only all other *pretended revelations*. Such truths and matters-of-fact as we can make out by reasoning and research, we are content to take, as proved by reason; but there are other things which could only be made known to us by *express revelation*; and for *such things* we take Scripture as our only rule of faith. And, as for matters of divine Revelation, our principles are briefly these:—

We are so bold as to think it plain to common sense that men should not receive as a divine Revelation what cannot be *proved* to be such.

We receive what Christ and his Apostles taught, because we find that they *proved* their divine commission by miracles and the fulfilment of prophecies, &c.

We believe in the teaching of the Bible, because we find that the Bible can be *proved* to be a trustworthy record of what Christ and his Apostles taught.

We do *not* receive the traditions of the church of Rome, because we do *not* find that they are trustworthy records, and

because we *do* find that they are repugnant to the teaching of Scripture.

We do *not* admit the infallibility of the Pope, because we do *not* find that he can prove his divine commission, and because we *do* find that he teaches things repugnant to Scripture.

Now, if this gentleman has anything to say against these principles, let him say it. But let him not put words in our mouths which we never thought of, and then pretend that he has refuted *us*, when he has only refuted his own imaginations.

If any Roman-catholic is so ill-informed as to believe that the Faith of Protestants is what that Tract represents it, let us hope that the true exposition of Protestant principles (and who can deny that it is so?) which has been here put before you, may induce him to reconsider the matter.

You will see then that, on our real principles, it is not at all necessary for us to show that the Bible *commands* us, in so many words, to take it as our rule of faith, or *forbids* us, in so many words, to receive anything beyond it. It is enough to say, that the Bible *commands* us to hold fast what the Apostles taught—the faith “once for all delivered to the saints”—and declares every one to be accursed who shall teach “any other Gospel.” If so, then we are clearly bound to receive nothing as the Gospel beyond what the Apostles taught, or different from it; and therefore we are bound not to receive what the Church of Rome teaches, except when *proved* to be the same as the Apostles taught. In a word, it is the teaching of Christ and his Apostles which is the rule of our faith; only, *we know* of no certain *record* of that teaching except the Bible.

Then, as for the Bible commanding men to obey living infallible teachers, we do not want the Bible to inform us that there are no such teachers now in existence as are spoken of in those texts. We see plainly, with our own eyes, that there are now no such persons as the Apostles were;—witnesses of Christ’s resurrection, who had *seen Him* after He was raised from the dead—called to their office by the Lord Himself—and proving their commission by the “signs of an Apostle,”*—that is, “signs, and wonders, and mighty works.” And we see further, plainly, with our own eyes, that the Popes of Rome, who claim

* 2 Cor. xii. 12: “Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought amongst you in much patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty works.”

to be infallible, teach things directly opposite to the doctrine of the true Apostles. And we further see plainly, with our own eyes, in the Scripture, that the Apostles, when writing (2 Pet. i. 13—15) and speaking (Acts, xxi. 25—35) in the immediate prospect of death, and warning their disciples of the dangers to which they would be exposed, and showing them how to meet those dangers, said not one word of any *infallible successors* to themselves, but only exhorted Christians to watch and remember what had been *taught them*. Now this is precisely what we do; being ready to believe anything which can be *proved* to have been taught by the Apostles. Bank-notes and Bills of Exchange are received as having the requisite signatures. They do not say in words that nothing else is to be received. But the burden of proof is with him who presents a Bill. Let him show the signature.

We do not then (as this gentleman pretends) attempt to *prove* from the promises of infallible direction made to the Apostles, that there were to be no infallible teachers after them. We only say those promises do *not prove* that there were to be, after the Apostles died, any such infallible teachers; and that *other texts* show that there were *not*; and that, even if there were not such texts, it would remain, still, for any persons claiming infallible authority, to *prove* their authority; which they cannot do. This shows at once the absurdity of his citing such texts as John, xx. 21, 22; John, xvii. 18, 20; Luke, x. 16. And the rest of those which he cites pp. 7, 8, are just as little to the purpose.

For example,—Matthew, xxviii. 20: “Lo! I am with you always even unto the end of the world.” Does this prove that the Apostles were to have infallible successors even to the end of the world? Cannot Christ be “with” his people, except He make them infallible? Christ promises elsewhere, that “wherever two or three are gathered together in his name, He will be in their midst.” Matthew, xviii. 20. Did He, therefore, promise to make them infallible? Does this gentleman himself mean that any two or three Christians assembled in Christ’s name, are infallible? He promises again: “If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” Is that promising to make every one who loves Christ *infallible*?

In a word, if this promise means that Christ will be “with” the successors of the Apostles in *precisely the same way* as He was with the Apostles themselves, then the popes and bishops of the Roman-catholic Church cannot be the successors of the Apostles; for Christ is manifestly not with them as He was with the Apostles,—making them witnesses of his resurrection, and enabling them to speak with tongues and work miracles, and rendering each single bishop by himself infallible, as each single Apostle was.

But if it only means that Christ will be *with* His Church always, so as to give Christians all the aid, outward and inward, which they really need, under various circumstances, for knowing his will and doing it; *that* is the meaning *we* put on the words, and are content to stand by—only, we cannot presume to say that we *absolutely require* infallible living guides, and, therefore, *must have them*.

Well, then he brings up Matthew, xviii. 17, which he ought to have been ashamed to cite, and which has been considered already in No. II.

Then, 2 Tim. i. 13, 14, and ii. 2: to which we answer, that we *do* hold fast the teaching of the Apostle Paul so far as we know it; and we think it most important, that the ministers of the Church should be “faithful men,” and “able to teach others also;” since *we do not* expect that, whether good or bad, faithful or unfaithful, they will be *forced* (as Roman-catholics fancy of their wicked Popes) to *teach aright*, however they may *believe* or *live*.

Then, 1 Cor. xi. 16: to which we answer, that the Apostle does not propose the custom of the churches as a “test of truth,” but as, in things indifferent, a test of decency.

Then, 1 Ep. John, iv. 1—6: to which we reply, that we do our best to “try the spirits” by comparing them with the doctrine of the Apostles; and therefore reject the teachings of the Church of Rome, and its Popes and Councils, who pretend to *inspiration*, and yet do not conform to the Apostle’s doctrine.

Then, 2 Thess. ii. 15, and 1 Cor. xi. 2, to which we reply, also, that we are ready to keep all traditions that *can be proved* to have been delivered down by the Apostles as things to be observed in all ages.

And thus we have gone through all his texts, and are very

well satisfied to have our Protestantism *weighed* in their balance ; and so may make an end.

Only before we conclude, let us just remark that this gentleman should not be so positive that, if there be an infallible church, it *must be* the Church of Rome ; since, if antiquity, and boasts, are to determine the matter, the Greek Church has somewhat better claims. For the Greek Church is the *older* of the two ; Jerusalem being the Mother Church of all, and Antioch having been (it is said) the *See of Peter* before he went to Rome : while the Greeks boast at least quite as much of their Church's infallibility as the Roman-catholics of theirs.

And when you look back at all that has been said in these tracts, by *one of their ablest* writers, and consider how very easily they are all refuted, you may well wonder how any one endowed with the gift of reason should be led to adopt their system.

May, 1851.

No. VIII.

WHEN one looks only at the *arguments* which Roman-catholics bring in support of their religion, it does, indeed (as we remarked in the last Caution), seem strange how any man of sense can be led to adopt their system. But the truth is, that it is not by arguments addressed directly to the Reason, that men are commonly drawn into that system at first, or retained in it afterwards, but by skilfully working on their feelings and imaginations.

Indeed, we have known a Roman-catholic preacher declare openly, that men ought, in matters pertaining to religion, to give themselves up completely to the guidance of their feelings, and renounce all employment of their reason. This, he said, is the way to comply with our Saviour's injunction to "receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child." A child, the preacher observed, believes implicitly whatever his parents tell him, and does what they bid him, without thinking of inquiring whether it is reasonable or not. And this, he added, is what is required of the Christian. And so it is, with respect to anything which we are sure *is* really taught us, or commanded us, by our heavenly Father. But we ought, first, to be very sure of this: else we may be in the condition of a silly child, who believes implicitly what it is told by some gipsey or beggar-woman who is designing to steal it from its real parents. And hence it is that we are exhorted by the Apostle to be "children in malice, but in *understanding* to be men;" and that our Lord warns His disciples to "be wise as serpents, though harmless as doves." We pity a child that is deceived by some wicked impostor, through natural weakness of understanding; but *we* should deserve more blame than pity, if, when God does bestow on us the gift of reason, we refuse to use it, and resolve to be led by our feelings and affections alone, without considering at all whether these are directed towards right or wrong objects.

If you will get some of the tracts which we examined in

No. IV. or No. VII., and read them over from beginning to end, you will find that they wear, at first sight, a very persuasive—or, at least, plausible—appearance; and you will wonder, perhaps, how things that seemed so weak and ridiculous, in our account of them, should look so well in their own shape. Yet, upon reflection, you will perceive that there is scarcely a single point of *argument* in any one of them which we have not stated, and stated quite fairly: only, it was our business to *strip off* all the artful ornaments which concealed the weakness of the reasoning, and which were meant to catch the fancy of the reader, and enlist his feelings on the side of the Roman Church.

If a house looks new, and clean, and well-furnished, a thoughtless purchaser will be apt to conclude that it is a good house, and in thorough repair; but an experienced builder will not be so easily satisfied. He will take down the hangings, and scrape away the paint; he will probe the walls and tear off the skirtings that hide the ends of the beams; and it will often happen that, under his examination, what seemed, at first, an elegant and well-built mansion, likely to last for many years, will look in a few hours, little better than a ruin just ready to tumble down. It may seem barbarous thus to dismantle a gentleman's house; and the owner will, perhaps, cry out at the rudeness of the proceeding; but who is really to blame? Not surely the architect, who merely does his duty, but he who seeks to put off a bad article for a good one. If he had not tried to *sell* his house, no one could have molested him. He might have made it as gay as he chose, and lived there till it fell on his own head, if such had been his pleasure. But when he offered it for sale as a safe dwelling, then a cautious purchaser was bound to examine the bargain. And so we also are bound to warn you against being deluded by “whited sepulchres.” It is but fair to show you what a bitter pill it is that has been artfully gilded over.

You will observe, however, that we examine those tracts only *by way of specimen*. It cannot be expected that we should answer everything that the writers of them may chuse to say from time to time. That would be a job indeed! For they seem to be abundantly prolific in controversial pamphlets; and if we were bound to attend to everything they publish, we should soon have little else to do.

Now there are some other very important topics besides those we have already referred to, on which we desire to lay our opinions before you: and we must not suffer ourselves to be drawn away from that part of our design into the pursuit of these light butterfly-sheets which are flying through the country. We have endeavoured to show you how to *catch* these things; and they are so flimsy, that, once caught, they may be crushed to powder by a child's finger.

But before quitting this part of our subject entirely it may be profitable to notice, once for all, some of the chief commonplace topics that run through most of the popular declamation one hears every day in favour of the Church of Rome.

I. Roman-catholics, for example, are fond of appealing to the great extent of their communion, and the vast *numbers* comprised in it, as if this circumstance enabled them to bring an overwhelming weight of witnesses in favour of the truth of their doctrines: and they seem to think that we show great audacity in rejecting the *judgment* of so numerous a body of men as the adherents of their Church.

But these numbers, of which they boast so much, are not properly *witnesses* at all.

When Lord Nelson, at the battle of Copenhagen, was signalled to cease fighting, and resolved to disobey, he put up a telescope to his *blind eye*, and said, in a tone of bitter irony, to the officer next him, "I protest I can see no signal."

Now, if ten millions of people, who could see very well with one eye, were to look at a certain object with the other, and report upon it from hearsay, their collective testimony would go for nothing.

Let us take another illustration. There is a sort of car used in Ireland, on which the company sit at each side, back to back, while the driver is perched on a little seat in front, and has a clear view of the road all round. Now, if several persons on one side of such a car should make it a point of honour never to turn round, but to put full faith in the reports of the *driver*, they might have very good sight, and be very trustworthy witnesses as to what was *before them*; but, for the rest, nothing at all.

This is the very case of the Roman-catholics: and the truth is, that even the very *smallest sect* of Protestants has more

witnesses in its favour than the Church of Rome. For, suppose they were but thirty or forty in all, yet each of these *professes*, at least, to follow his own sincere conviction, based on the Scriptures, to which he has access. He *may*, indeed, be weak, and incompetent, and unduly biassed by some one else, without being aware of it; and, if so, his testimony is worth little; but still, each of these men does bear his testimony: he *is* a witness, though he may not be a powerful one. But the Roman-catholics are not witnesses at all. They *avowedly* give up their own judgment in religious matters; and can testify only that *so and so is told them* by the priest. They may be competent witnesses in other matters; but *this* they are looking at with the blind eye.

If three or four persons, each writes an account of some transaction he has seen, and these agree together in the main,—here are so many distinct testimonies to the facts so described. Now, if in opposition to these, some one should produce 10,000 copies of a *book* giving a different account, and all struck off from the same types, would you not say that he was acting absurdly, since all the 10,000 *copies* could never reckon for more than one witness?

Just so it is with the vast multitude of Roman-catholics. Their creed is fixed for them; and they are trained to receive it, from the first, without hesitation or inquiry, upon the authority of “the Church,” whose infallibility they think it impious to question, even though it should declare black to be white. And this ready acquiescence in all that the Church teaches, is commended as “Supernatural faith,” and much superior to the Protestant way of examination and inquiry.

Such a kind of faith, they say, relieves them from those numerous and various doubts which perplex Protestants. And this is, in a certain sense true. A person who is taught to receive at once without inquiry, all that is told him by a certain (supposed) infallible Church, is thus exempted from a *multitude* of doubts: he has only *one* doubt in place of many; namely, whether there is any good ground for believing in this infallibility. But this one doubt is quite as likely to perplex him as all the rest put together. For how can he know that the guide he is told thus to follow is a safe one? Not, surely on the word of that very guide; since he must *first* put full faith in it *before*

to each other as to the doctrines which they believe to be taught in Scripture. But all the different versions of the Bible agree as to the main outline of the history, and of the discourses recorded; and, therefore, an unlearned Christian may be as sure of the general sense of the original as if he understood the language of it, and could examine it for himself; because he is sure that unbelievers, who are opposed to all Christians, or different sects of Christians who are opposed to each other, would not fail to point out any errors in the translations made by their opponents. Scholars have an opportunity to examine and inquire into the meaning of the original works; and therefore the very bitterness with which they dispute against each other proves that, where they all agree, they must be right. For though all sects of Christians agree in receiving the Gospel, most of them find some difficulty in certain passages of Scripture,—some in one and some in another,—when they attempt to explain these in conformity with their own peculiar tenets.

All these translations, in short, are in the condition of witnesses placed in a witness-box in a court of justice; examined and cross-examined by friends and enemies, and brought face to face with each other, so as to make it certain that any falsehood or mistake will be brought to light.

Such, then, and so great, is the security which an unlearned Christian has in a free Country; and you will perceive, upon reflection, that this is just the same sort of evidence as that on which you believe that the earth is round, or that there is such a city as Paris—though you may have never been at Paris, nor ever sailed round the world.

But then observe, further, that it is only in a *free Country* that such security can be had. If it were notorious that no one could dare to question the common translation of the Bible: and, if all other versions of the Scripture were carefully searched for, seized and destroyed,—then there might be some colour for suspecting that the translation put into our hands was not a faithful one.

Or, again, if all, learned and unlearned, were carefully trained from their childhood to believe some particular translators *infallible*; and if even the best scholars were discouraged from exercising their own judgment on the meaning of the originals, and were required to employ all their learning and ingenuity

in defending some one version in everything, through thick and thin,—in that case, again, we should lose much valuable security, which we have now, for the general trustworthiness of the common translations.

You see, then, that, though much evil may often arise from the freedom of thinking and speaking which we enjoy, yet much good arises from it also: and hence you may perceive, further, how foolishly those act who would take away that freedom, lest the *unlearned* should be injured by it. For that would be taking away from the unlearned one of the greatest of all securities for the *truth* of what is told them by their betters.

But people are apt to make a confusion in their own minds between two different meanings of the word “authority,” and, in consequence of that, to fall into serious mistakes.

When we speak, for example, of the *authority* of an Act of Parliament, regularly passed, we mean that the parliament has *power* to bind the Country to *submit* to that Act. And, you will observe, that such authority extends quite as much over those who disapprove of the measure as over those who approve it. Every good subject is bound, and every subject may be compelled, to submit to and *obey* an Act of Parliament; but no one is bound to *approve* of it, or think it wise, any farther than he sees reason for so thinking.

But we use the word “authority” in quite a different sense when any one says, for instance, that “Macaulay is a great *authority* in matters of English history.” That means that he is a writer to whose statements and opinions about English history we should pay *attention* and *deference*, as the statements and opinions of an intelligent person, who has diligently examined the matters about which he writes.

Now it is in this sense of the word that learned and able men may be said to have a certain “authority” in questions connected with religion, from having carefully examined such questions with the aid of all the best lights which their learning and ability could supply. Whatever, in short, gives a man some peculiar advantage towards forming a correct judgment on any question, ought (unless we are pretty sure that he has wilfully neglected to use that advantage) to give his judgment some degree of weight or “authority” in this sense.

But no one could think of saying that a great historian had

any *authority* to *force* men to submit to his decisions; or, on the other hand, that all Acts of Parliament should be regarded, under pain of a misdemeanor, as perfectly *wise* and well-judged.

II. Roman-catholic writers, again, sometimes produce a strong popular impression in favour of their church, by selecting some part of its system which may be painted in bright colours, and made to wear an attractive appearance, while all the rest, with which that part is connected, is kept in the back ground.

Thus, for example, we have fine pictures drawn of the ancient monasteries. The monks are represented as all pious men, who, bent upon the cultivation of a religious temper of mind, withdrew from the world for that purpose; as if the business and duties of this world were not the very discipline which God has appointed for cultivating real righteousness in us. And then, the learning, peace, and piety of the monasteries is strongly contrasted with the ignorance and irreligion and perpetual wars, of the dark and troublous times, which are commonly called "the middle ages," in such a manner as that even Protestants are sometimes led to think and say that, at least in former times, and *for* those times, the monasteries were commendable institutions. But they forget that it was the very system of which these were a part, which *made* the world so dark and unquiet; and then, like the ivy, which has reduced a fine building to a shattered ruin, they held together the fragments of that ruin.

Of course, if you teach men that holiness can be only, or can be best attained by withdrawing from the world into a cloister, all those who are bent on living a holy life *will* withdraw from the world; and they will, in so withdrawing, take from the world that which should reform it—the benefit of their teaching and the encouragement of their example. One after another all those most promising men, who should have been, each in the place where Providence had set him, "the light of the world," and "the salt of the earth," will leave the station to which God had called them, and seclude themselves within the walls of a monastery; and then, in proportion as the influence of good men is removed more and more, society will become every day worse and worse. The business and pleasures of the world will be looked upon as necessarily sinful, and those who mix in them as necessarily unholy; and the thought of using

them as a discipline in godliness, and learning how to "use this world without abusing it," will be lost out of men's minds; till at last, by the working of such a system, all appearance of piety will really be confined to the monasteries, and the common state of society, and the ordinary course of life, will be tainted with impurity, and disturbed by violence, and the world will seem again, as it did in heathen times, to "lie in wickedness." When the SALT is thus drawn away from the mess, and collected to particular spots, the remainder is left to putrify.

Let us illustrate this by an example. Some, even Englishmen, who have visited Slave-States, are satisfied at being told that the slaves are far better off and more civilized there than in their own barbarian Countries; which is, probably, for the most part true.

But *why* have the African countries continued so long in gross barbarism? They have long had intercourse with Europeans, who might have taught them to raise sugar and cotton, &c., at home, for the European markets, and in other ways might have civilized them. And it cannot be said that they are incapable of learning; since free negroes in various countries, though they have the disadvantage of being a degraded caste, are yet (however inferior to us) far advanced beyond the savage tribes of Africa.

But it is the very *slave-trade itself* that has kept them barbarians, by encouraging wars for the purpose of taking captives to be sold as slaves, and the villanous practices of kidnapping, and trading in each other's happiness and liberties. It is the very system itself, which men seek to excuse by pointing out the comfortable state of slaves when they are caught and sold, that, to a great extent, produces, and must, if persisted in, perpetuate, the barbarous condition with which this comparative comfort is contrasted. The whole of these African tribes might, under a better system, have enjoyed, in freedom, far, very far—greater comfort in their native land, than that which *some* of them now possess, as slaves, in a foreign land.

So, also, in the case of the monasteries. Those who shut themselves up there might have exercised a much better and more rational piety (like the Apostles and first Christians) out of them, and in the world; and if they had lived amongst their fellow-men, would have helped to raise the whole tone of society

around them. And it was just the same evil system which buried some good men (like lamps in sepulchres) in the cells of monasteries, and made the general mass of society outside the walls of those establishments so bad, that it seemed to excuse their withdrawal from it.

It is to be acknowledged, indeed, that some monks sometimes did some good for the rest of the world. They were often engaged in education, attendance on the poor, copying of manuscripts, agriculture, &c., and all these were really *useful* occupations. It is not to these things we object, when we object to monasteries; for with monasteries these have no necessary connexion.

Let Associations be formed for a good object, when needful; instead of first forming an Association as an end in itself, and *then* looking out for *something* for it to do; else, that something, being a secondary matter, will sometimes be ill-done, or neglected, and sometimes will be what had better be left undone.

If, for example, in the late famine, Government had resolved to lay out a certain sum in making and improving the highways in Ireland, and had then proceeded to look out for overseers and labourers for the work, how different would have been the result from what took place, when they voted money for *relief*, and *then* looked out for something to be done by the people relieved! They mended some roads, and spoiled more, and made some that were not so much wanted as the agricultural labour from which they drew off the labourer.

"Oh, but there is *something* good in these institutions, and in many other parts of the Romish system also; and therefore it is wrong to blame it in the gross." Well, thus we ought to deal with *individual men*; never pronouncing any censure on any one's character and conduct, without adverting to his good qualities and actions, even though few and small. But not so with *systems* and *measures*. If one of these does, on the whole, more harm than good, and cannot be divested of its evil tendency, it should be *totally* condemned and rejected.

Be on your guard, then, against that *cant* of men who "know neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm," which one now-a-days hears so often. "There is *some* truth in so and so; and, therefore, it is the *mission* of him who holds it, *though mixed with much error*, to propagate the belief of his doctrines. He is

fulfilling the designs of Providence ; and his errors, perhaps, are making the truth which is mixed up with them all the more easily received." *Some Truth!* Yes ; the serpent had *some* truth in what he said : the forbidden tree *was* a tree of knowledge. And there was some truth, too, in Eve's reflections. It was pleasant to the eye, and desirable to make one wise. Here was "the love of the beautiful, and of knowledge," in the very first sin which man committed. It is always some mixture of the good and true which makes evil look plausible, and makes error lasting ; and if we censure nothing but what is one mass of flagrant vice and absurdity, we shall leave precisely the most dangerous evils in the world uncensured. No mixture of evil is ever necessary for any really good purpose : and those who act as if it were, are really "doing evil that good may come."

III. A favourite topic with all Roman-catholic convertists is *Unity*. They represent themselves as the great apostles of peace and union, who are endeavouring to heal the breaches, and put an end to the divisions and distractions, of a rent and dismembered Church. And this way of talking, especially in the mouths of amiable and pious men, is very attractive to many. They feel as if persons of so sweet a temper, and so peaceable a spirit, must be right.

But you may remember that, all through the great French war, Buonaparte was always talking of his desire of peace ; and, in truth, did aim at what would have ensured it, namely, universal empire ; but *till* all the world would agree to *submit* to him, he never would let his neighbours alone.

One should look, then, not merely to the *sincerity* with which any one aims at peace, but also to the *conditions* he loads it with, and the pertinacity with which he insists on these. It *would* be very desirable to be in full communion with our fellow-Christians all the world over, now ; just as it was very desirable then to be at peace with the French and Italians, &c., and other people under Napoleon's influence ; but peace is too dearly purchased by slavery of any kind—certainly by spiritual slavery. Truth is the first thing. Aim at that. Those who reach truth will reach unity, because truth is *one*. But, on the other hand, men may, and often do, gain unity without truth ; which is so far from being a good, that it is a great evil. It makes falsehood strong, and the professors of it contented in their error.

IV. But what catches unthinking persons more than almost anything else is, the pretence that it is *safest* to belong to the Roman-catholic Church. "Protestants," they say, "acknowledge that a man *may* be saved in our Church, while we declare that no Protestant can be saved: it is *safer*, therefore, to join us, who, by the confession of both parties, may attain salvation."

Now, a moment's reflection will show you how empty and childish is this way of arguing. Indeed, if there were anything in it, it would show that a man should always be on the side of those who were most presumptuous and most uncharitable. Let an ignorant fanatic start up and found a sect, of which the one peculiar tenet is, that men should button their coats behind, and boldly declare that no one can be saved who does not conform to that absurd rule, and then, according to this way of arguing, we should all be bound to submit to his injunctions, as *the safest course*. Nay, much more should we be bound in such a case as that; since no one could say that there was anything absolutely immoral in turning his coat the wrong way. Or, suppose the captain of a crazy ship chuses to say that those who sail in a sound and well-appointed packet are sure to be lost, and therefore persuades you to trust yourself to him, would you, because it is granted that his leaky vessel *may possibly* reach port, think it *safest* to leave the good ship and take your passage in the bad one? No. You would, no doubt, say—"I see no ground at all for this impudent man's threatenings of disaster to those who will not sail with him; but *I do* see very good grounds for fearing that, if I embark in his ship, I shall go to the bottom; and, therefore, it is safest to take the good ship, and leave him to navigate his old foundered craft as well as he is able; wishing him heartily, all the while, a better voyage than he deserves. If any persons are so imposed upon as to *believe* his to be the safer ship, they are to be pitied for their mistake; but if *I* were to embark in it, believing as I do that it is a crazy vessel, I should be guilty of an *inexcusable* folly."

The real question is, which is most likely to speak truly—he who says that there are great errors and much danger in the Church of Rome, or he who says that you cannot be saved out of it? That is the real question for honest, truth-loving people to determine.

Besides, Roman-catholics are quite inconsistent in using

such an argument as this: because determining by the *safer* course is what has place only in cases of doubt, and has respect only to action, not belief. Men cannot really *believe* a thing, merely because they think it safest to believe it though they can *act* as if it were true.

Now, according to Roman-catholics, you cannot really belong to their Church unless you *believe*, without the slightest doubt or hesitation, everything which that Church teaches, even though it were to teach that black is white. It is not enough to *act as if* what the Church teaches were true, but you must believe it faithfully, or else you cannot be saved. Wherefore all that this argument of theirs, even if it were a good one, would prove, is that a man is *more safe* if he believes all that the Church of Rome teaches, than if he does otherwise. But how will that help him to believe it, without the least doubt and hesitation, when it is from the very supposed doubtfulness of the case that the inference is made?

If you are in doubt between the arguments of the Protestants and Roman-catholics, there might be some sense in saying: "Act according to the safest side;" but what sense is there in saying: *Because* you are in *doubt*, believe firmly, and without any doubt or hesitation, in what seems to be the safer side of the question?

But even as to action, *we* are really on *the safe side*, and not they. For the rule in doubtful cases is to abstain from doing what is *doubtful*. Now most of what we hold and practise is allowed by Roman-catholics to be true and good in itself; only, they *add on* to it other things which *we* say are false and wrong. The safe course, then, if there be any doubt about these matters, is to have nothing to do with their additions.

Thus, for example, both parties grant it *safe* to pray to God through Jesus Christ; but Roman-catholics say it is further *useful* to ask the Saints to intercede with God for them: which practice Protestants regard as "will-worship," and strongly tending to rank idolatry. Here, then, the safe course plainly is to abstain from so dangerous a practice.

So also as to pictures and images. It is granted that these are not *necessary*; for the Church, for some centuries, abhorred the use of them, and Roman-catholics themselves grant that

they are apt to be abused. The *safe* course, then, is to let them alone.

Again, it is certainly lawful to have public prayers in the vulgar tongue: but to offer them in a strange language *seems* to be forbidden in Scripture,—to be absurd,—and far from *edifying*. Saying Mass in Latin, then, among people who do not understand Latin, is plainly not the *safest* course.

Again, to celebrate the communion in both kinds—that is, giving both the cup and the bread to all communicants, is manifestly *lawful*: for it was so celebrated by Christ himself, and by the Church after Him for many Ages. But, taking the cup from the laity is confessedly a *new invention*, a departure from Christ's institution, and to be vindicated by no even plausible argument. To celebrate the communion, therefore, in both kinds, as Protestants do, is manifestly the *safer* course.

Thus we have gone through some of the chief topics used by Romish convertists. But do not suppose that those who openly avow that their object is to bring you into subjection to that Church are the only false teachers against whom you are bound to be on your guard. The process of conversion to Romanism is, on the contrary, much more successfully carried on by others who loudly disavow—and in many cases sincerely—any such design. To *these* we mean to direct your attention in the next Caution.

June, 1851.

No. IX.

“Beware of false prophets, which come unto you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”

IT is no waste of time to look back occasionally upon one’s work, and see what has been done. For, except we pause awhile now and then to review what we have already gone over, we shall be apt to forget its connexion with the rest; and so, taking up each topic as quite a new subject, we shall be tempted to dismiss entirely from our minds what went before. A mason must take care to keep his new work level with the old: else, the line will slant from the perpendicular, and the wall be in danger of falling down.

We will return, then, for a few minutes, to the beginning, and see how we arrived at the present point in our subject.

What led us to send you these “Cautions,” was the great agitation raised in England by the “Papal aggression.” The Pope had put in force the claim (which he had *always* made), of governing all baptized persons in England, just as if we had no bishops of our own; and the gentleman whom he appointed Archbishop of Westminster openly declared, in a very offensive manner, that he had the exclusive right of ruling, in spiritual matters, all persons throughout the district attached to his See.

The avowal of such bold pretensions, and the arrogant way in which they were put forward, excited general indignation; and many people in England seemed seized with a kind of panic, as if the Pope were just going to make us all his subjects by force, whether we would or not, and that, consequently, we should prepare ourselves for a forcible resistance. And, in men’s common talk in conversation, and their speeches at the public meetings called upon that occasion, there was such a mixing up of civil

and religious questions—of the danger to our *liberties* from Roman-catholic ambition and intolerance, and the danger to our *faith and morals* from Roman-catholic false teaching: and then, again, of the insult offered to our Church by acting as if it did not exist, and of the insult to the Queen in assuming such titles as she only has a right to bestow,—there was such a mixing up of all these matters together as seemed to show that many of those who talked most, and seemed most likely to lead others, had themselves very confused notions of the whole matter. Men declared their wish to tolerate the Roman-catholic Church, which is essentially episcopal, and subject to the Pope, and, at the same time, not to allow of Roman-catholic bishops, or direct intercourse with the court of Rome;—they demanded measures to vindicate the Royal Supremacy, by preventing the assumption of certain titles in England, while they were willing—many of them—to put up with such assumption in Ireland; though the Royal Supremacy is the same in both countries:* they required measures to be taken in England for checking Romanism, which they said would be no persecution *there*, while they granted that such measures would be persecution if extended to Ireland. They professed great alarm at the increase of the numbers of Roman-catholics *in England*, and called for legislation to prevent the dangers thence likely to arise to civil and religious liberty, while they thought that no such danger was

* Some persons seem to fancy that the Roman-catholic Relief Bill of 1829 has so completely modified the Act of Union between Great Britain and Ireland, that no arguments can fairly be *now* drawn from that, against adopting different measures towards Roman-catholics in the two parts of the United Kingdom. They forget that the Union was expressly designed by Mr. Pitt, who procured it, as a preliminary step *towards* Roman-catholic emancipation. He intended, by the Union, to remove all pretext for separating the case of the established Church in Ireland from that of England. Had Ireland remained a separate kingdom, with a legislature of its own, and had the Roman-catholics been, in such a state of things, admitted to equal civil privileges with Protestants,—then, since they possess a preponderance of numbers (though not of wealth or intelligence) it would have been hard to resist their claim to have their religion *established* in that kingdom. But by making the two countries *one Kingdom*, and the two Churches *one Church*, that objection was taken away; since now, even in point of numbers, Protestants have a great preponderance in the United Kingdom. Yet now, that very measure of Roman-catholic emancipation is said to have nullified the Act of Union, which the Act of Union itself was procured to facilitate. And all this time they blamed those who agitated for a repeal of the Union, while they were themselves setting the example of seeking to violate one of the most solemn stipulations of the Act of Union. They were for leaving two millions of Roman-catholics in England at the mercy of the Protestants, because these latter were the stronger; and two millions of Protestants in Ireland, where these were the weaker party, at the mercy of the Roman-catholics; as much as to say, in each country let might overcome right!

threatened by the numbers of the *Irish* Roman-catholics, which are more than twice as large. Their inconsistent demands, in short, might remind one of the Prince in the Arabian Nights, who asked for a tent large enough to cover an army of 100,000 men, and yet small enough to fit in his pocket. That would be a very unreasonable thing to ask, except (as he did) of a *fairy queen*.

In this state of things, we thought it expedient to address to you some timely Cautions—to point out to you the folly and wickedness of attempting to put down religious error, or to repel insults and aggressions upon our Faith or Church, by civil penalties or laws of any kind; and to show you that the great danger, in the present case, was one which could be met by no legislative enactment, but by each individual for himself.

But, in doing this, we never said or implied that there was no danger to civil liberty from the Pope's influence in this kingdom, or that such a danger might not be properly guarded against by acts of Parliament. We did not meddle with that question; because our object was to direct your attention to what lies in your *own* power—not to that which must be left to the wisdom of our rulers. If a great tract of land be unwholesome from fens and marshes, a physician may do much good by telling his patients who have to travel through it, how to fortify their constitutions against the bad air and poisonous vapours; but it would be idle for him to exhort private persons to get it drained, because that can only be done at the public expense.

In that case, however, a complete effectual remedy might be provided by a public measure. The fen might be *drained*, and then the inhabitants and travellers would no longer need the physician's prescriptions. But, in this case, whatever public measures may effect, they cannot of themselves remedy the evil, or render the care of private persons unnecessary; while, on the other hand, the whole danger *may be* prevented, and entirely prevented, without any legislative enactment.

For, the Pope's authority is built upon opinion. His power (except within his own little principality, in which he is supported by foreign bayonets) is exercised directly only on the minds of those who embrace the doctrines of his religion. The foundations of his dominion, then, are these doctrines, and they are laid in the minds of men. If, therefore, men's faith in those

doctrines be generally subverted, his dominion falls to the ground at once; and all his boasts and pretensions become nothing but empty vaunting, not worth a wise man's attention. But, if on the contrary, those doctrines spread until the Roman-catholics become a considerable majority in this kingdom (as may well be the case if they are opposed only with acts of Parliament), they will very soon be able to *repeal* all the laws which may now be passed for the security of our civil liberty. And if our rulers should be so unwise (which they never will be) as to pass a *law* against any one's becoming a convert (openly) to Romanism, this would give Roman-catholics a great advantage; because no one could be sure that his neighbours were not all *secretly* Roman-catholics in their hearts.

The great danger, then, (even to civil liberty,) arises from the spread of Romish doctrines; and *that* is a danger which cannot be guarded against by laws and penalties, but by fair argument. And, accordingly, it was by fair argument that we sought to deal with it.

We considered (in Nos. II. III. and VIII.) some of the most plausible popular topics advanced by Romish convertists; and lest it should be thought that we had misrepresented the force of their reasonings, we examined (in Nos. IV. and VII.) a great number of the Tracts which some of the ablest and most dexterous managers of their cause are now busily circulating through England; and we made it (as we trust) pretty plain that, wherever the secret of their success *does* lie, it does *not* lie in the strength of their arguments.

But the secret of their success is to be found (as we pointed out in Nos. V. and VI.) in the tendency of corrupt human nature towards such a system as the Romish. Each of us has a traitor in his own breast, always ready and willing to open the gate to the enemy. We are all naturally *prone* to those errors upon which Romanism is built; and, in consequence of that natural proneness, too many Protestants have already admitted principles, which, if fairly carried out, must inevitably lead to the reception of the whole body of Romish tenets. The seed has been, as it were, already deposited in their minds. It *may* lie long dormant. But as soon as circumstances favour its growth, it will spring up after its kind, and bear the proper fruits of its species.

You may see a clear proof of this in the progress of what is called the "Tractite"* party towards Romanism.

Not many years ago, a considerable number of clergymen and others became alarmed at what they considered an "aggression" of the State upon the Church, and at the great spread of Dissenting principles and practices in England. They desired (very properly) to see the Church in a position in which it should be able to stand without relying upon the secular power, and to obtain union and due subordination amongst its members. But, instead of looking in Scripture for the *true* foundation upon which Christ has placed his Church, in full confidence that, when found, it would prove a sufficient one for all needful purposes, they seem rather to have looked about them for arguments to defend such a system of Church-authority as they thought necessary for the times. Their intention was to devise a "middle way" between Romanism and Dissent; but they executed that intention by taking the *principles* of Romanism, and, for a while, stopping short of the necessary *conclusions* from those principles.

Their scheme was pretty nearly this. They agreed with the Roman-catholics in holding that "the Catholic Church" (meaning thereby one visible organized body of Christians under one government), was the authoritative expounder of the will of God; and was consequently the Authority to whose decisions all men were bound to submit their private judgments; only, they did not allow that the *Pope* was the head of the Catholic Church. They said that the governors of the Church were Bishops, who could only be ordained by Bishops in a continual succession from the Apostles, and who alone could impart to others the power of administering the Sacraments necessary to salvation; so that they at once excluded from the Church and from all the ordinary means of grace, the whole body of Dissenters in this country, as also almost all the Protestant Churches on the continent of Europe, who do not pretend to any such "Apostolical succession" of men ordained by a continual chain of Bishops down from the Apostles' times. The "Catholic Church," then, according to them, was the whole Body of orthodox believers living under the government of Bishops; and

* So called from the publications (*Tracts for the Times*) by which they first sought to influence public opinion.

they held that councils of such Bishops (meaning thereby *the majority* in councils of Bishops), were the supreme authority in the Catholic Church for determining religious faith and practice. And the rule which the governors of the Church were to follow in their decisions was (according to these persons) Scripture as interpreted by tradition—that is, such a meaning as could be fixed on the written records of the Apostles' teaching, by reports of their teaching delivered down by word of mouth.

But, as it was evident that, if the Greek or the Roman-catholic Church be not exclusively the Catholic Church, there is now no such Church to be found as they imagined the Catholic Church to be—that is, one Body under one government, able—or even claiming to be able—to decide on matters of faith, and make laws for all Christians, hence, they were obliged to look for such a Body in times *past*. They settled, therefore, that the whole Church now, except ourselves, was in a state of schism; which schism began when the Greek and Latin Churches broke from communion with one another: by which unfortunate event the possibility of holding general councils of Bishops was cut off. But our Church, they said, intended to keep faithfully to the model of the ancient Church as it stood compact and entire before that schism: and was to be obeyed so far as it delivered to us the faith and discipline of the united primitive Church. Thus, the faith and discipline of the Church of the first six centuries became practically their guide; and to it they set themselves to conform as closely as they could.

Now, the first six centuries was a period during which those errors which we commonly call Romish, were gradually stealing in unperceived amongst Christians. The seeds of corruption in human nature were, during that period, springing up into poisonous weeds; which, being left to grow unchecked, spread wide over the whole of Christendom, till at last they appeared full-blown in that shape which they wear in Romanism, and in the Eastern Churches. It was but natural, therefore, that when these men took the writers of the first six centuries for their guides (without venturing to try them by Scripture) they should be led on, step by step, to that very Romish system, towards which the Church of those ages had been itself moving. They were like travellers who, coming to the brink of a precipice, go back to the point from which the road which conducted thither

set out, only to turn round and follow the same track again. The same principle which induced them to explain Scripture by the teaching of the Church in the second century, obliged them to explain the teaching of the Church in the second century by that of the third, and so on; till finally, the last and most corrupt teaching of the Church became ever the authorized expounder of all the rest.

Accordingly, as their own eyes gradually opened to the real state of the case, they first perceived, and then began cautiously to avow the necessity of drawing daily nearer and nearer to Romanism.

They taught, for example, that the Lord's supper is a real sacrifice offered by the priest, for the living and the dead. Only, they added that this doctrine had been much *abused* by the Church of Rome.

They said that the bread and wine were changed by the words of consecration, and "became the body and blood of Christ;" only they would not call that change *Transubstantiation*, but regarded the manner of it as a mystery not to be curiously inquired into.

They said that priests had the power of remitting sins by absolution, after confession and penance; and that penance and absolution by a priest were the only way to obtain remission of grievous sins after Baptism. Only, they added, that they could not go the *whole length* of the Romish doctrine on that subject.* And so in other particulars.

It was no wonder, then, that many of those who had thus been brought on to the very brink of Romanism, should, when they became aware of their real position, pass on. But much as their case is to be lamented, and great as the damage is which they have done to our Church, *they* are not the members of the party that are most to be feared. They have left us and become *avowed* Romanists, and by that very act have set us on our guard against them.

Much more formidable are the leaders of the party who still remain in outward communion with us. They "come to us in sheep's clothing," professing to be loyal and devoted members of our Church, and therefore, they find too often ready listeners.

* See the Bishop of Ripon's *Pastoral Letter to the People of St. Saviour's*. Appendix.

They may be compared to a *recruiting depôt* for the Church of Rome, kept up among ourselves: and, sooner or later, the persons who fall under their influence very generally become open converts to Romanism. And their efforts are the more insidious, because they, for the most part, begin by loudly declaring that they teach nothing but the recognised doctrines of the Established Church,—that they are inculcating “Church principles,” and that all who are opposed to them are little better than Schismatics.

We intend hereafter to examine their “Church principles” more fully, and point out to you how repugnant they are both to Scripture and to reason. But, at present, we will confine ourselves to showing that these are *not* the principles of our Church, but, in many respects, quite opposed to its decisions.

In doing this, we shall not refer you to the works of old Divines of our Church, many of which may not be readily within your reach, but shall confine ourselves to those public authorized Formularies which we trust you all have in your hands—the Articles and Liturgy of our Church.

The writings of our old Divines are, many of them, very valuable, and, in one sense, of *great authority*—that is, entitled to respect and deference; but they are not of *authority* as determining what any man should hold in order to be a consistent member of the Anglican Church. Our eminent Divines have, in their writings, declared their own opinions, which, in some matters, are very various. But they had no power to determine the principles of the Church. Those were settled by the Church itself, and set forth in its public documents. And the very circumstance that opinions going beyond what those public documents express, did exist, and were *well-known* and *current* in the days of our Reformers, this gives even the more force to their deliberate omission of these, and their distinct declaration of what they do mean to maintain.

I. Now, in the first place, on looking at the Articles and Liturgy, you will find that our Church never puts itself in the position of a mere subordinate member of some great Body, nor professes to act under the authority of the Church Catholic, and merely to enforce the decrees of that Church in matters of Faith and Discipline; but, as for matters of Faith, it propounds them

directly on the authority of Scripture; and as for matters of discipline, it deals with them as having itself a perfect independent right of ordering such matters as may seem best to itself.

There are, for example, no ancient christian documents, except the Scripture, that can more justly claim to be called "Catholic" than the three creeds which have been received, from times of great antiquity, by the majority of Christians both in the East and West. Yet, in recognising these, our Church makes no mention whatever of any *such* claims which they may have on our respect. It does not say that these creeds should be received as the voice and judgment of the universal Church, or as attested by Catholic tradition; but, "the three creeds ought thoroughly to be received and believed; *for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture.*"—(Art. VIII.)

Then, again, as for general Councils, which must be the supreme governing authority of the Catholic Church if there be any such authority, our Articles plainly declare them to be neither necessary, nor infallible—"General Councils," (says Art. XXI,) "may not be gathered together without the commandment and will of Princes. And when they be gathered together (forasmuch as they be an assembly of men, whereof all be not governed with the Spirit and Word of God) they may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining unto God. Wherefore things ordained by them as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be *declared* [plainly proved] that they be taken out of holy Scripture."

Now, if our Reformers had thought, and meant to teach, that General Councils are the supreme governors of the Church, and divinely instituted for that purpose, they would never have said that it was unlawful to convoke them without the will and commandment of Princes; because that would have been making a divine institution subject to the will of man. Nor, if they had meant to teach that private judgment must always submit to the decision of a General Council, would they have said, that, "things ordained by them as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of holy Scripture." For it would be quite childish to say this, if, after all, the Council were to be the only judge whether or

not this all-important point *could* be “declared” or made evident. If any man, or Body of men, refer us to Scripture as the sole authoritative standard, meaning that we are not called on to believe anything as a necessary point of faith on their word, but only on *our own* conviction that it is scriptural, then they place our faith on the basis, not of human authority, but of divine. But if they call on us, as a point of conscience, to receive whatever is proved to *their* satisfaction from Scripture, even though it may appear to *us* unscriptural, then, instead of releasing us from the usurped authority of Man taking the place of God, they are putting upon us two burdens instead of one. “You require us,” we might reply, “to believe, first, that whatever you teach is *true*; and, secondly, besides this, to believe also that it is a truth *contained in Scripture*; and we are to *take your word* for both.” Our Reformers manifestly did not require such *double submission* as this to Assemblies which they expressly declare to be *fallible*.

Again, as for matters of discipline, rites, ceremonies, &c., our Church always speaks of *these* as being (except the two Sacraments) of human institution, and of *itself* as having a perfect right to establish or alter them. “It is not necessary,” (says Art. XXXIV.,) “that Traditions and Ceremonies be in all places one, and utterly alike: for at all times they have been divers, and may be changed, according to the diversities of countries, times, and men’s manners, so that nothing be ordained against God’s Word. . . . Every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish ceremonies or rites of the Church ordained only by man’s authority, so that all things be done unto edifying.” Accordingly we have, in the Preface to the Common-prayer, a long and distinct account of the grounds upon which the Church went in arranging these matters; in which the Reformers, all along, treat both the Liturgy and the Ceremonies as things of mere human authority, and as falling entirely under their own control. “The forms,” they say, “of divine worship, and the Rites and Ceremonies to be used therein, being things in their own nature indifferent and alterable, and so acknowledged, it is but reasonable that, upon weighty and important considerations, according to the various exigency of times and occasions, such changes and alterations should be made therein, as to those who are in place of autho-

rity should, from time to time, seem either necessary or expedient." And, again:—"There was never anything *by the wit of man* so well devised or so sure established, which in continuance of time hath not been corrupted; as, among other things, it may plainly appear by the Common Prayers in the Church, commonly called Divine Service." Then, again, when our Reformers are vindicating their conduct in retaining some of the ancient ceremonies, what is their language? Do they speak of themselves as *bound* to do so by their allegiance to the "Church Catholic," by whose authority they were established? Do they betray the least suspicion that, in handling such things, they are dealing with a "sacred deposit," a system of rites, like those of the Old (Levitical) Law, prescribed by the Spirit of God, "a pattern showed in the Mount,"—a body of ceremonies invested with a mysterious and "sacramental" character? Quite otherwise. "If men," they say, "shall think much that *any* of the old do remain, and would rather have all devised anew, then such men, granting some ceremonies convenient to be had, surely where the old may be well used, there they cannot reasonably reprove the old only for their age, without bewraying of their own folly. . . . Furthermore, such shall have no just cause with the ceremonies reserved to be offended. For as those be taken away which were most abused and did burden men's consciences without any cause, so the other that remain, are retained for a discipline and order, which (upon just causes) may be *altered and changed*, and therefore are not to be esteemed equal to God's Law. . . . And in these our doings we condemn no other nations, nor prescribe anything but to our own people only; for we think it convenient that every country should use such ceremonies as they shall think best to the setting forth of God's honour and glory, &c."

All this shows clearly the meaning of Art. XX., when it says, "*The Church* hath power to decree Rites and Ceremonies." For, from the passages just quoted, it manifestly appears that the Article is not speaking of a (supposed) universal Church, acting as a great corporate Body through its governors, but of *each and every* "particular or national Church." And this way of speaking is very common. When we say, for example, that "it is the duty of *the* magistrate to punish crimes against *the* State," we do not mean to indicate some *universal* magistrate,

and *universal* State, but we mean that *every* magistrate is bound to punish crimes against that particular State in which he holds his office. And when the Article says that "it is lawful for a christian man, at the command of *the Magistrate*, to serve in the wars," no one can doubt that this means the Magistrate of his own Country. When we pray that God would "speed *the plough*," we do not mean to imply that there is one grand *universal plough*; but we pray God to bless the work of each and every plough employed in agriculture.

And so, most manifestly, in Art. XIX. "*The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered:*"—there, we say, manifestly also the Article is speaking not of one visible organized Body, as the universal Church, but of each and every particular visible Church of Christ. It is laying down, in short, what is, and all that is *essential* to the notion of a true Church.* And that it is not the universal Church that is spoken of, but each particular Church, is further proved by the sentence immediately following, in which mention is made of the Churches of Alexandria, Rome, &c.

II. And among these essentials to a true Church, you will observe, the Article makes no mention of any *particular form of government*. It does not lay down the great "Church-principle,"—that "where there is no Bishop there can be no Church;" but merely says that the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments are necessary to constitute a congregation a visible Church of Christ. And this silence is made more emphatic and significant by the language of Art. XXIII.—"It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the Sacraments in the congregation, before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by *men who have public*

* Compare Articles XIX. and XXIII. with the corresponding Articles in the Augsburg Confession:—

ENGLISH ARTICLE.

The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

AUGSBURG CONFESSION.

Est autem Ecclesia congregatio Sanctorum, in qua Evangelium rectè docetur, et rectè administrantur sacramenta.

authority given them in the congregation, to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard." Is it credible that, if our Reformers had meant carefully to inculcate as a "Church-principle," that no persons, in any Christian Church, could lawfully call and send ministers, but only Bishops, ordained by a regular succession from the Apostles, they would not, on this occasion, have said so—when it is *the only occasion*, in all the Book of Articles, on which the calling and sending of ministers is ever mentioned? The plain good sense of every unprejudiced reader will, we think, at once determine that such a thing is quite incredible.

But why, then—it may be asked—has our Church determined (in the Preface to the Book of Ordination, &c.) that "no man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest, or Deacon *in the united Church of England and Ireland*, or suffered to execute any of the said functions, except he be called, tried, examined, and admitted thereunto, according to the form hereafter following, *or hath had formerly Episcopal consecration, or ordination?*"* Why is *Episcopal* ordination thus made necessary for ministering in the Anglican communion, if the Reformers did not intend to make the necessity of Episcopal orders a fundamental principle of our Church? The answer is very easy to be found, if we only consider the circumstances of the times. If our Reformers had admitted men, ordained abroad in Protestant Presbyterian Churches, to minister here without re-ordination, they would, by that act, have compelled all who held the necessity of *Episcopal* orders to quit their communion,

ENGLISH ARTICLE.

It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering in the congregation, before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by those who have public authority given unto them in the congregation, to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard.

AUGSBURG CONFESSION.

Docent quod nemo debeat in Ecclesiâ publice docere, aut Sacramenta administrare, nisi rite vocatur.

* Some persons who pretend that this clause has decided the doctrine of Apostolical succession to be a principle of our Church, endeavour, most inconsistently, to explain the silence of Article XXIII., by saying that such words as "Bishop" and "Episcopal" are quite ambiguous, and would not exclude "Danish Bishops and German Superintendents." But, if those words would have been ambiguous in the Article, how come they to be unambiguous here? If unambiguous here, why should they have been avoided in the Article.

because *they* would have scrupled to receive the Sacraments at the hands of men whom they regarded as unlawfully (or, at least, irregularly) ordained; while, on the other hand, even the strictest Presbyterians could not deny the validity of Episcopal ordination; since, even if there *ought to be* no such separate order as that of Bishops in the Church, yet our Bishops are at least *Presbyters*.

Our Reformers, then, without passing any judgment upon other Christian Bodies, chose for themselves, in the exercise of their undoubted rights, that none should minister in *their communion* except men *episcopally* ordained; and *that*, as it would seem, because such a rule was the only (or most obvious) way of excluding neither those who *held*, nor those who *denied* the necessity of Episcopal ordination.*

It is the height of presumption, therefore, for any one to put forward the doctrine of the necessity of "Apostolical succession" (in its modern sense), as a principle of our Church, and stigmatize as disloyal members, and false brethren, all who doubt or deny that doctrine.

III. Again, with respect to the rule of faith—is it credible that, if our Reformers intended to make it a "Church principle," that tradition "blended with Scripture" is the rule of faith, they should have expressed themselves as they have? "Holy Scripture," they say (Art. VI.), "containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an Article of Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." But they do *not* add, that it is equally necessary to prove the articles of faith by tradition, or that it is only by tradition that the true sense of Scripture can be determined.

If that had been their meaning, is it credible that, not only here, but in the exhortation to persons to be ordained Priests, and in the questions addressed to them, the Church should have been wholly silent upon the necessity, or even the importance of tradition? The candidates are, you know, admonished that

* It is worth observing, that you might say with perfect truth, "No man can be, in this country, a regular and real justice of the peace who has not been commissioned by the Queen," and yet you would not mean by that, that a justice of the peace in the United States of America is no lawful magistrate, because the government of that country is Republican, and they have no King or Queen.

they cannot hope for success in their ministry without employing "doctrine and exhortation *taken out of the Holy Scriptures*, and a life agreeable *thereto*;" they are exhorted to consider "how studious they ought to be in reading and learning *the Scriptures*, and in framing the manners both of themselves and of them that specially pertain unto them, according to the rule of *the same Scriptures*;" and they are shown how, "by daily reading and weighing of *the Scriptures*, they may wax riper and stronger in their ministry;" but not a word of solemn admonition is added on the necessity of "blending" tradition with those Scriptures, and trusting only to that sense of Scripture which tradition is supposed to fix.

They are asked: "Are you persuaded that the *Holy Scriptures contain sufficiently* all doctrine required of necessity for eternal salvation, through faith in Jesus Christ? and are you determined, out of the *said Scriptures*, to instruct the people committed to your charge, and to teach nothing, as required of necessity to eternal salvation, but that which you shall be persuaded may be concluded and proved by *Scripture*?" But they are not asked whether they will submit implicitly to have their judgment of the sense of Scripture determined by the testimony of tradition.

Now, is it credible that, if the Church intended thus to blend tradition with its rule of faith, it should have been silent upon the subject, when an occasion like this occurred, which would seem to *demand* some notice of it?

IV. Again, if our Church had really meant to sanction the belief that, in the Communion, there is an offering made of the bread and wine, after consecration, as a sacrifice for the people by the Priest—is it credible that every syllable which, in the old Liturgies, implied such an offering, should have been *carefully struck out* of our Communion Service;—while, at the same time, it is carefully expressed that we *do* offer a very different sacrifice—"a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving," and "present ourselves, our souls and bodies, a reasonable [rational], holy, and lively [living] sacrifice unto God?"

V. Again—if our Church had meant to teach that the bread and wine in the communion, do literally become or contain the Body and Blood of Christ, so as that the Body and Blood of Christ are received in the *hands and mouths* of the communicants,

would it teach (as we find it teaching in Article XXVIII.), that "the Body of Christ is given, taken and eaten in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And THE MEAN WHEREBY THE BODY OF CHRIST IS RECEIVED AND EATEN IS FAITH?" And (as in Article XXIX.), "the wicked, and such as be void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth *the Sacrament* of the body and blood of Christ, yet *in nowise* are they partakers of Christ?" For, if the elements become, or contain the Body of Christ, it cannot be denied that the wicked do receive his Body with their hands and mouths, though not to the benefit of their souls. And hence you may easily understand that, when in the Catechism our Church declares that "the Body and Blood of Christ are *verily and indeed* taken and received BY THE FAITHFUL in the Lord's Supper,"—it means by those words, "verily and indeed,"—"in the best and highest sense,"—or, as it afterwards adds, to the "strengthening and refreshing of *our souls*;" just as when our Lord declared that his Flesh was "meat *indeed*,"* and that He was the "*true bread*," He meant bread and meat in the highest and best sense,—that is, *spiritual* food for the soul of man.

VI. Lastly, if our Church had really meant to teach that her Presbytery had the power of remitting or retaining sins as *against God*, is it credible that, when our Reformers retained the old form of ordaining priests, "Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained:" they should have *explained* them by this addition, "And be thou a faithful *dispenser of the Word of God, and of His holy Sacraments*." And again, "Take thou authority to *preach the Word of God, and to minister the holy Sacraments*." Is it not manifest that our Reformers have here distinctly explained what privilege they thought to be conveyed by those words of Christ,—namely, the privilege of *declaring* by the Word, and sealing by the Sacraments, the promise of God's forgiveness to all penitent sinners? Accordingly, you will find that the ordinary form in our Morning Prayer, of "declaring and pronouncing" God's forgiveness—though plainly only a *declaration* of God's pardon—is called "The Absolution or Remission of Sins." And likewise, in the Communion, that is called an "Absolution," which is manifestly nothing more than a *prayer* for God's forgiveness.

* John vi. 55.

Nor, when the Church has thus explained what it means by the privilege of "remitting sins," imparted to its presbyters, and given notice of the large sense in which it uses the term "absolution," can anything be more unfair than to lay hold of the word "absolve" in the office for the Visitation of the Sick, as if it must needs mean more than "declare God's forgiveness"? If the Church really held that the priest could himself forgive sins, and that his ministry was instituted for the express purpose of remitting them, upon confession and penance, it would have been grossly negligent of a plain duty, if it had not earnestly *pressed* all men to seek the benefit of absolution. On the contrary, you know it never speaks of penance, but as a punishment inflicted on scandalous transgressors, to *bring them to repentance*, and as a warning to others, as in the Communion Service; never invites any to confession, but such as are troubled in conscience, and perplexed with doubts; nor permits private and personal absolution, but upon the "earnest entreaty" of the penitent.

On the whole, then, it is plain that these so-called "Church principles" are so far from being principles of our Church, that some are expressly condemned, and none of them recognised or implied in any of our public Formularies. So that, when the upholders of these principles put themselves forward as the only true children of the Anglican Church, we may borrow, in our own behalf, the words which a great prelate once applied to some of their predecessors:—"I will not meddle with that, whether T. G. be a competent judge who are the true and genuine sons of the Church of England. No doubt, in his opinion, those who come nearest to the Church of Rome are such: and advance such speculations as lay the charge of schism at her own door. But true Sons are no more for laying division to the charge of their mother, than the true mother was for dividing the son. Those are certainly the most genuine Sons of our Church who own her doctrine, defend her principles, and conform to her rules; and are most ready to maintain her cause against all her enemies. And among these there is no difference, and there ought to be no distinction. But if any frame a Church of their own heads, without any regard to the Articles, Homilies, and current doctrine of our Church, and yet will call that the Church of England, and themselves the only genuine sons of it, I

do not question T. G. and your brethren would be glad to have them thought so, to lessen our number and impair our interest ; but none that understand and value our Church, will endure such a pernicious discrimination among the sons of the same mother, as though some few were fatally determined to be the Sons of our Church, whatever their works and merits were ; and others absolutely cast off, notwithstanding the greatest service.”*

* Stillingfleet. *Three Conferences*, pp. 19, 20.

July 17, 1851.

No. X.

“Beware of false prophets, that come unto you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”

IT may probably have surprised some of our readers, that we should have begun with the *Church*, rather than *Scripture*; that we should have begun (as we did in the last Caution) with showing how inconsistent the principles of the Tractites are with those of our Church, as set forth in its authoritative Formularies. Some may have said to themselves, upon reading that Caution—“After all, this is a matter of comparatively small importance. The *first* point is to show that the Tractite opinions are not agreeable to *Scripture*; since, if that be once proved, they are entirely overthrown, whether the Church condemn them, or condemn them not.”

Now that, no doubt, is the first point in real intrinsic *importance*. But the first point in importance is not necessarily, on that account, the point to be always taken first *in order*. If we had begun with showing the unscripturalness of these pretended *church-principles*, *some* would have concluded that our Church (to which the Tractites profess such devotion) is itself at variance with *Scripture*. “See,” they would have said, (as, through indiscreet management on our part, Dissenters have too often been allowed to say); “see in what difficulties members of the Established Church are involved, when they come forward to oppose Romanizing tendencies in their own Body. They are obliged to throw the decisions of their own church overboard entirely, and attack their opponents with nothing but scriptural arguments, just as if there were no such books as the Liturgy and Thirty-Nine Articles in existence.” And they might even have gone on (with what is really the bitterest satire) to *compliment* us on being happily unfaithful to our engagements, and

inconsistent with those Formularies to which we have solemnly recorded our assent.

Others, again, familiar with the cry of "church-principles," and already inclined to the notion that the Church is to be their guide in the interpretation of Scripture, would have listened with prejudice to any reasonings about the sense of Scripture; concluding that, since our inferences contradicted what they supposed to be "church-teaching," there must be some fallacy, though they could not tell what.

It is true, indeed, that we might have *afterwards* gone on to disabuse both parties; but then, perhaps, it might have been too late. It is a bad plan to fire a gun first, and point it afterwards.

We began, therefore, with demolishing the stronghold of the Tractites, their pretended adherence to the Church. After that, the other post may be carried with ease, being, indeed, quite unsupported.

It seemed, too, that no time was to be lost in trying to stop the growing mischief done by this vain, but confident (and too often unrefuted) assumption on their part, of "carrying out church-principles," and "acting up to the requirements of our Church."

Many hasty opponents, for example, give these men a great advantage, by rashly crying out against the rules and declarations of our Church as intolerable relics of Popish superstition, whenever they find such rules enforced, and declarations relied on, by those whom they suspect of a tendency towards Romanism. This is really playing into the hands of the Tractites; it is allowing them to say, "You see that *our* opponents are those who call the *Church* popish."

Now we are not saying that there may not be some things in our Liturgy and Canons which might, at the present day, be advantageously omitted or altered. There may be some things which our Reformers retained (though they would otherwise have changed them) to avoid giving general and unnecessary offence, and which (from an alteration in men's habits and ways of thinking) fell afterwards into almost universal neglect or disuse; so that now the revival of such observances *gives* precisely the same general and unnecessary offence which the Church sought to *avoid* by retaining them at first. Such things, it

might be well now to alter or expunge; or there may be parts of our Formularies which we may think capable of improvement in various ways, and, therefore, may wish heartily to see improved. But all this is very different from (while we profess to be members of the Church) proscribing its solemn enactments, as in themselves superstitious and intolerable. It is one thing to wish to have a law changed, and another to refuse to obey it; the one is consistent with the truest loyalty; the other is rebellion.

It must be confessed, however, that something may be said in excuse for this precipitate folly on the part of the laity in our Church.

An apostasy to Romanism of a large number of those to whom they had been taught to look up, came upon them suddenly like a thunder-clap. This roused them to perceive that they had long (though unaware of its existence) been surrounded by the working of a system which had prepared men's minds for so alarming a conclusion; and startled by that conclusion, they now became as restlessly watchful and suspicious as they had been negligent before. *Wherever* they met with anything unusual in the language or behaviour of the clergy, they were inclined to suspect it as Popish; and *whatever* any Tractite teacher seemed to show any peculiar zeal for enforcing, *that* they were sure was Popish.

Thus, when some new and fatal disease becomes prevalent in a country, those who do not know its exact nature, but only its deadly character, are often filled with a thousand groundless alarms, and regard every odd twinge or throb they may chance to feel in any part of their bodies as symptoms of that dreadful malady.

It was quite natural, too, that in this state of alarm men should have taken more notice of *new forms* and rules, than of erroneous and strange *doctrines*, on the part of their pastors. For, in the first place, it requires much less knowledge and attention to detect a new outward observance, than an erroneous statement of doctrine; and, in the second place, the Tractite teachers are apt to proceed much more warily and slowly in disseminating their doctrines among our congregations, than in the introducing of rites and ordinances. Ceremonies they are even obtrusive in forcing upon people's notice, and they seem

eagerly to search the Canons and Rubrics for such rules as (through the gradual change of customs) are most likely to be peculiarly distasteful and unsuitable at the present day, that they may specially enforce these. But as for doctrines, they take a more cautious course; feeling their way as they advance, and not committing themselves at first to any distinct statement, except when they are speaking to none but favourable hearers.

Altogether, indeed, the description which an old father of the Church has given of the proceedings of the gnostic heretics of his time would suit very well as a sketch of the Tractite policy. "If you enquire of them in good faith, they settle their faces, raise their eyebrows, and say,—‘It is a high mystery.’ If you question them closely, they prevaricate, and assert the common faith in ambiguous language. If you show that you understand them, they deny their doctrines. If you press them in argument, they put on the guise of artless simplicity. They do not commit themselves to their own disciples before they have secured them. They have the art of persuading before they teach, while truth, on the contrary, persuades by teaching, not teaches by persuasion.”*

It is surprising, indeed, that those well-meaning but injudicious persons who are fond of dwelling upon all the good done by the Tract party in restoring discipline and opposing dissent, should not have learned by experience how much they defeat *their own* (professed) object, by raising a dread and disgust against rubrics, ordinances, and all church-regulations, by *associating these in men's minds* with Romanizing tendencies.

The scene which our Church presents resembles too much what sometimes takes place in war upon occasion of a night alarm. Each party is firing upon its own troops instead of the enemy. Many of those who would oppose Romanism, are attacking our Church (the greatest bulwark against Romanism) as Popish; and many of those who seem desirous to work out the system of our Church in its original frame and constitution, are doing their utmost to render that impossible, by denouncing *the Protestant principles* of the Church, and representing its cause as the cause of childish ceremonies, of ignorance, of blind obedience, and of intolerance.

Travellers in Spain report that there are in that country

* Tertullian contra Valentinianos: prope init.

many families of concealed Jews, who profess to be Roman-catholics, to escape the Inquisition.

Of course they cannot bring up their children from the first as Jews, since young children would be sure to betray them; so they bring them up as *ultra-strict* Roman-catholics, which both establishes their own credit, and prepares the children's minds for what is to come, by fixing *an association with the idea of Christianity* of all that is *absurd and burdensome* in ceremonies, penances, &c. Then, when a youth has come to years of discretion, the father declares himself a Jew, and the son, it is said, never fails to adopt that religion.

Now, if any one *wished* to create an association in people's minds of the frivolous, the irrational, the troublesome, the irksome, with *our Church*, might he not proceed in the same manner? and would not the issue in general be to drive men out of the Church, and to destroy entirely their respect for it?

And are not some actually thus proceeding, out of blindness, who really have a directly contrary intention, and who are sincere, though very injudicious, friends to our Church and its institutions?

In many cases of disputes about rites and ordinances we might say, as Moses said to the angry Israelites,—“Sirs, *ye are brethren*; why do ye this wrong *one to another*?” And the dispute might easily be terminated, if both parties would attend to these *timely cautions*.

I. Let those clergymen who are anxious to enforce strictly the rubrics and canons of the Church be careful to disavow and condemn as earnestly and publicly as possible the Romanizing doctrines and practices which have come to be mixed up in men's minds with attempts to enforce the strict discipline of the Church. We say “publicly,” because, with some persons, their praise of the Tractites, for enforcing discipline and reviving an ecclesiastical taste, is uttered *aloud*, while their censure of them (for only corrupting doctrine) is spoken *aside*. Let them then disavow these corruptions openly and candidly, and not (for party-purposes) flatter and compliment concealed Romanists because these seem, for the present, to work with them, and to be zealous for surplice-preaching and week-day services. Especially let them take heed that they give the people no just reason to suspect that they put Church-rules upon a par with God's laws,

and neglect or forget how distinctly our own Church teaches that "Christ's Gospel is not a ceremonial law (as much of Moses' law was), but a religion to serve God, not in bondage of the figure or shadow, but in the freedom of spirit," and that even the ceremonies which it enjoins* "are retained for a discipline and order which (upon just cause) may be altered and changed, and, therefore, are not to be esteemed equal with God's law," and that "it is not necessary that traditions and ceremonies be in all places one and utterly like; for at all times they have been diverse, and may be changed, according to the diversities of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's word."†

II. Let them take heed that they do not so enforce the *letter* of rubrics and ordinances as to destroy the spirit of them, and so insist upon the authority of the Church as to bring all ecclesiastical authorities into contempt.

One great end, for example, of rubrics and Church rules, is to establish "an uniform and comely order." Now, when a general and long-prevailing custom has dispensed with strict adherence to some particular rule, which has been found unsuitable in practice, then, for *individual clergymen here and there* to revive the strict enforcement of that rule, is really to break uniformity, and introduce disorder. Rules long and generally departed from can never be advantageously revived but by *public authority*; and where the bishops and chief governors of the Church have long sanctioned, and still continue to sanction, such a departure from the letter of the law, then, for individuals of the inferior clergy to enforce it rigidly, is, in fact, to hold up their superiors to the people as grossly careless of their duty, and neglectful of the solemn trust reposed in them.‡

There are, you know, even in civil matters, many laws in the statute-book, which are marked as *obsolete*—that is, such laws as, though never formally repealed, have long ceased to be en-

* Preface to Common Prayer, "*of Ceremonies.*"

† Art. xxxiv.

‡ "Where disuse [of a practice] is general, not out of contempt, but upon other reasons, and there is no admonition by superiors, but a tacit connivance, there is a presumption of a consent towards the laying aside the strict obligation of the canons respecting it. . . . There is a difference between a custom obtaining the force of a law, and a custom abating the force of a canon. In the former case, the custom must be grounded on more evident reason than is necessary for the latter, wherein the casuists allow a permission of superiors, joined with reasonable circumstances, to be sufficient."—STILLINGFLEET, *Ecclesiastical Cases*, vol. i. p. 265.

forced, and which no Court of Justice would now enforce, even if called upon to do so. Now, what ~~would~~ be thought of a constable or justice of the peace, if he were to set about enforcing such laws as these at this time of day?

But if long disuse thus dispenses with even ^{*}unrepealed laws of the State, though parliament, which *could* repeal them if it would, is constantly sitting for a great part of the year, is it not (still more) reasonable to allow that laws of the Church may, in a similar manner, become obsolete; since the Church has, in fact, *no legislative assembly* in a condition formally to repeal such rules as have been found to be unsuitable to our times?

III. Let the clergy who are zealous for a strict enforcement of the rubrics of the Church, take care that they do not defeat the object of those rubrics by introducing *new* practices and ceremonies beyond what the Church has prescribed. Indeed, *much more* mischief might easily be done by *adding* to the ceremonies which our Reformers retained, than by *omitting* some of them. Several of the ceremonies which they retained are *in themselves* matters of no very great importance; and to omit one of these would be merely a breach of rule and order. But even a single new ceremony might be *in itself* highly objectionable, as implying some wrong principle, or false doctrine; and therefore the introduction of it might be *much more* than merely a breach of rule and order. It is absurd, then, to suppose that the Church, in laying down rules for the uniformity of public worship, intended carefully to guard against the lesser evil, of *omitting* any the least ceremony, and yet did not intend to guard against the greater, of *adding* to the ceremonies which it has enjoined.

On the other hand, let both the clergy and laity reflect, that though perhaps no one particular form or ceremony may be a matter of any great importance *in itself*, yet the breach of a rule imposed by competent authority is no slight offence, since it is to "offend against the common order of the Church, to hurt the authority of the magistrate, and to wound the consciences of the weak brethren."*

And let all take especial care not to strengthen the hands of the enemy by hastily crying down as popish everything in the regulations of the Church which displeases them, but candidly

* Art. xxxiv.

consider the true grounds of them, and seek information upon the real character of such regulations.

We knew (to give you an instance of the rashness with which such an outcry is sometimes raised) a case, in which much disturbance was occasioned by a clergyman's causing a person to be removed from church, who, though not intending himself to partake of the communion, chose to remain during its celebration. And not only was this man's forcible removal treated as illegal (which it certainly *was*), but the attempt and desire by warning and admonition to induce him to withdraw, was stigmatized as "popish." Now, on the contrary, in many of the Roman-catholic "masses" (as they call the communion) no one partakes of the sacrament but the priest; and, in almost all of them, the far greater part of the congregation present are mere *spectators*; and that, on their principles, reasonably enough; since they think that they can receive benefit from the Mass by worshipping the Host [consecrated wafer], and having it sacrificed for them. To confine the congregation, then, on such occasions, to communicants, would seem, on the face of it, to be rather a protest *against* Romanism, than what could fairly be called popish.

This is an instance (one out of many) of a very ignorant and unreasonable clamour. But it may be well to notice some other points, in which even well-informed and sensible persons have done much injury by blaming as "popish" certain ordinances of our Church which are not justly liable to any such imputation.

It is not uncommon, for example, to hear people speak of what are called "saints'* days"—that is, the days on which the Services of the Church remind us of some apostle or evangelist of Christ—as if they were days *dedicated* to those holy persons, and observed in a *religious honour* of them. Now, this was so far from being the intention of the Church, that it was expressly disclaimed in the very act of parliament which, after the Reformation, first fixed the observance of those days. After explaining the kind of observance proper for such festivals, the statute goes on to say—"The times appointed specially for the same

* It is to be remembered that, according to Scripture usage, *all* Christians are "saints"—that is, persons solemnly set apart for the service of God. The apostles, &c. are therefore much more fitly described by their names of office (as the Apostle Paul, the Evangelist Mark, &c.) by which they are *distinguished* from other Christians, than by this title "Saint," which marks only what they have in *common* with all members of the Church. See Discourse on "Christian Saints."

are called holy days : not for the matter or nature either of the time or day, *nor for any of the saints' sake* whose memories are had on those days (for so all days and times considered are God's creatures, and all of like holiness), but for the nature and condition of those godly and holy works wherewith only God is to be honoured and the congregation edified, whereunto such times and days are sanctified and hallowed—this is to say, separated from all profane uses, and dedicated and appointed, *not unto any saint or creature*, but only unto God and his true worship.”—(Statute of Edward VI. 5 & 6, c. 8.)

The intention of the Church, then, clearly was not to set apart those days in the way of a religious honour of the Apostles and Evangelists,* but to fix those special times for bringing before our minds the good examples and inspired doctrine of those eminent servants of Christ. And accordingly you will find, that these are the things always suggested to us in the Collects and Services for those days ; in which we are reminded to be “followers of the Apostles even as they were of Christ,” and that it is upon the word of God as “once for all delivered to the Saints” by them,—upon “the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets,” that we are to rest, and not upon the authoritative teaching of their pretended successors.

There are, indeed, days marked in the Calendar by the names of persons never mentioned in Scripture, and of events the records of which must be sought for in fabulous or superstitious legends. And some have taken advantage of this circumstance to pretend, that our Church has commended to us the examples of these men and women as eminently holy persons, and solemnly sanctioned the credibility of those events ; so that all consistent members of the Established Church are bound to reverence the conduct of St. Dunstan and St. Bridget, and believe in the achievements of St. George and the miraculous “Invention” of the Cross ! Some well-meaning persons, on the other hand, who felt themselves unable to exercise so strong a faith as all

* It is sometimes said that our Church observes two festivals (the Annunciation and Purification) in honour of the Virgin Mary. But this seems an error. As for the Feast of the Annunciation, it is not to the Blessed Virgin, but to the Angel's Message, that the Collect directs our thoughts. And the other is expressly described as “The Presentation of Christ, in the Temple, commonly called the Purification of St. Mary the Virgin.” The example of the Blessed Virgin is indeed a most profitable subject of meditation ; but the Church seems to have avoided, for obvious reasons, commemorating her by any special days set apart for that purpose.

this required, thought it best to cut the knot in which they were entangled, by pronouncing the Calendar of our Prayer-Books a "disgraceful relic of Popery."

But had these worthy persons taken the pains of examining that very Calendar, they would have found in it sufficient proof that, whatever the Church meant by those strange names, it did *not* mean to *consecrate* by them the days to which they are appended. For the Church has added to the Calendar an express List of "*all* the feasts to be observed throughout the year," among which those days are not enumerated; and the statute of King Edward, before cited, sets forth that same List, declaring that these holidays shall be observed, and "*none other.*"

Nor is it hard to understand the reason why names* now happily so strange in our ears, appear in the Calendar. The simple truth is, that the Calendar in the Prayer-Book, was not at first drawn up merely for the purpose of marking the Lessons and Psalms, &c., to be used on each day, but to answer for what we call an ALMANACK; and, accordingly, in the old Prayer-Books, not only are the Roman *Calends*, *Nones*, and *Ides* given (for the convenience of scholars writing and dating in Latin), but also the position of the sun in the signs of the Zodiac, the beginning and ending of the Dog-days, and even the times when the judges sat at Westminster. Now the people, before the Reformation, had been so accustomed to reckon birth-days, fairs, terms of leases, servants' wages, law sessions, &c., by the old saints' days (as indeed we still count our terms by "Hilary," and the "Morrow of All-Souls"), that it would have been greatly inconvenient if all notice of them had been expunged from that which served them as their only almanack. Accordingly, in a Latin Prayer-Book of Queen Elizabeth's time, this reason is distinctly given, and these names are said to have been added "to serve as marks of certain things, the proper seasons of which it is important to know, and which it would be inconvenient not to be made aware of."

Now, if you will bear in mind this important fact, that the Calendar was originally intended to answer the purposes of an

* Indeed, some of the words, subjoined to these days, are not *names* at all; as, "O Sapientia," which is the commencement of a hymn ("O Sapientia procedens ex ore Patris!"—"O wisdom proceeding out of the Father's mouth") sung in honour of Christ on that day.

Almanack, it will help you to see your way through another difficulty also.

Some persons, you know, are highly delighted, and others deeply distressed, at finding appended to the Calendar a list of "Days of Fasting or Abstinence:" which both parties agree in considering as an *ordinance* by our Church of the religious duty of *some* special kind of abstinence from food upon those particular days, though neither party can tell *what* kind or degree of abstinence is enjoined.

One may observe, however, in the first place, that it would be an incorrect use of language, almost amounting to a contradiction, to speak of an *ordinance* which ordains nothing definite—an injunction as to a positive duty, in which no one can say what it is that is enjoined.

When the Church directs what persons shall be baptized—shall be confirmed—shall receive the Holy Communion—no one can doubt *what* it is that he is required to do; the appointed Services being set forth, along with rubrical directions, in the Prayer-Book. And if there had been an express command given that all members of the Church should fast, as a religious duty, on certain days, we should have expected (as is manifestly necessary in the case of any positive ordinance) that the details should be no less distinctly specified. For "if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle?"

And, accordingly, in those Churches which do retain fasting among their public ordinances, all the particulars respecting the food to be used and abstained from, and respecting the dispensations that are to be allowed, are distinctly laid down, partly by the Church itself, and partly, within certain specified limits, by each bishop, from year to year, within his own diocese.

Now, the truth is, that our table of fast-days *had* reference (as one might reasonably expect) to such a distinct rule prescribing a certain fixed measure and kind of abstinence—only, it *was not properly a religious rule, but a political one*, as we shall now proceed to explain.

When King Edward VI. designed to abolish altogether the old Roman-catholic practice of abstaining from flesh-meat on certain days, a great clamour was raised by the fishing interest against that proposal. Those who are *compelled* to live on fish

for a good part of the year naturally contract a dislike to it, and never eat it when they can get meat. Now, this general distaste for fish led many persons (foolishly) to suppose that, if the laws which forbade men to eat meat on Fridays, &c., were repealed, fish would almost cease to be an article of diet. And, therefore, they strenuously resisted such a measure. Experience has now, indeed, fully shown how weak were such apprehensions; but we have undeniable proof in the Homilies how strongly they once prevailed, and what influence they had upon the legislature. "An answer" (says the Homily on Fasting, Part II.) "shall be made to a question that some may make, demanding what judgment we ought to have of such *abstinences* as are appointed by public order and laws made by princes, and by the authority of the magistrates, upon policy, *not respecting any religion at all in the same*. As when any realm, in consideration of the maintaining of fisher-towns bordering on the seas, and for the increase of fishermen, of whom do spring mariners to go upon the sea, to the furnishing of the navy of the realm, &c. . . . For that such laws *are grounded merely upon policy*, all subjects are bound in conscience to keep them by God's commandment. . . . And in this point concerning our duties which be here dwelling in England, environed with the sea, as we be, we have great reason to take the commodities of the water, &c. . . . And he seemeth to be too dainty an Englishman, who . . . will not forbear some piece of his licentious appetite upon the ordinance of his prince, with the consent of the wise of the realm—" with a great deal more to the same purpose. There is a statute, too, of Queen Elizabeth, imposing similar abstinence, which expressly enacts that whosoever shall publicly declare "that any eating of fish or forbearing of flesh, mentioned therein, is of any necessity for the saving of the soul of man, *or that it is the service of God any otherwise than as other politick laws are* and be, that then such persons shall be punished as the spreaders of false news are and ought to be."—(Act Elizb. 5.)

Now, as this abstinence was enjoined under severe penalties, it was of great importance that the people should have the means of knowing upon what days it was to be practised. A list of such days, therefore, was not only appended to the Calendar, but (for the benefit of those who could not read) the minister was required to give public notice of them every Sunday; which

was the way of proclaiming such fasts to which the people had been previously accustomed. But many things, you know, are (for convenience' sake) published in church which are not properly of a religious nature; while, in this case, the coincidence of these fasting-days with days set apart for purely religious purposes (as Fridays in memory of our Lord's crucifixion, &c.) seemed to render such a mode of publication the more proper, though it must be confessed that it also fostered a confusion between the *religious* and the *political* observance of them.

It is true, indeed, that "Fasting" and "Abstinence" are also spoken of in some of our *Services*. But if you will consider the passages in which they are mentioned, you will see that very different things are meant from that sort of fasting and abstinence which we have just explained.*

In the collect, for example, for the first Sunday in Lent, the virtue which they instruct us to pray that we may be enabled to practise, is, "to use *such abstinence* that, our flesh being subdued to the spirit, we may *ever* obey God's motions, in righteousness and true holiness;" which must evidently be a duty, not for a certain portion of each year, or week, but for every time alike. The abstinence and self-denial which our Reformers direct us to practise as a *religious* duty in the sense of resistance to *all* temptations, and patient endurance of *every* cross that may be laid upon us, and constant self-control and subjugation of the appetites, and abstinence from *every* kind of luxurious excess, is evidently not a duty to be reserved for particular days and seasons, but to be habitually practised, and wrought into the whole character.

Then, again, in the special service for Ash-Wednesday (the Communion), the penitents are described as "turning to God in *weeping, fasting, and praying*;" where fasting is manifestly spoken of, not as a positive duty in itself, but as (like weeping) a *natural expression* of deep sorrow. And when you reflect that this solemn Service was intended as a substitute for the severe discipline of the early times (as you will see distinctly stated in the beginning of it), and to work upon the consciences of such

* "In precepts of abstinence, we must distinguish the sense of the church, as moral abstinence, i.e. subduing the flesh to the spirit; and a ritual abstinence in mere difference of meats, which our church lays no weight upon; and a religious abstinence for a greater exercise of prayer and devotion, which our church doth particularly recommend at particular seasons."—STILLINGFLEET, *Cases*, vol. i. p. 272.

great offenders as the primitive Church would have put to open penance, you will acknowledge that such deep and earnest humiliation would be really natural in their case. But the Church plainly no more *enjoins* fasting here than it enjoins weeping, nor prescribes a measure of abstinence any more than a measure of tears.

And you will observe that it is thus also that fasting is often mentioned in Scripture, as a natural expression and accompaniment of deep sorrow. Indeed, the two ideas of *fasting* and *mourning* were so closely connected, that, in the only appointment of a fast in the law of Moses, that on the day of atonement (Lev. xxiii. 26), abstinence from food is not expressly mentioned at all; but the Israelites are merely directed to "afflict their souls"—that is, to keep a solemn day of mourning.

This will help you to see the force of our Lord's question and prophecy, in Matt. ix. 15, when explaining the reason why his disciples did not, like those of John and the Pharisees, practise fasting—"Can the children of the Bridechamber *mourn*" (in Mark ii. 19, the word is "*fast*"), "as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them: and *then will they fast.*"

A wedding was, we know, a scene of especial festivity among the Jews; with which anything savouring of mourning, among the Bridegroom's companions, [the "children of the Bridechamber"] would have been inconsistent; but when the Bridegroom (by which it is plain He means Himself) shall be taken from them, "then," says He, "they will fast in those days."

From this passage it is plain, among other things, that neither our Lord, nor the questioners, had any thought of *self-discipline* as a legitimate purpose of "fasting" (a notion which arose several Ages after); for in *that* point of view, the disciples would have needed it while their Lord was with them as well as afterwards; so that his reply would have been nothing to the purpose.

It is to be further remarked respecting this passage, that it contains no *precept* as to what his disciples were *enjoined* to do; only a *prophecy* of what *would* take place. It is, however, important to determine aright what it was that the prophecy related to;—what period is denoted by "those days;" since it was a period during which *mourning* is spoken of,—not indeed as

a thing *commanded*, but as natural and *suitable* for Christ's disciples.

Now some have understood by "those days" all Ages of the Christian Church subsequent to the departure of Jesus in bodily person from the Earth: comprehending therefore in those days of mourning, the present, and all future time, till his triumphant return to judge the world at the last day. But this is surely to overlook, or greatly to misunderstand, his own words. For in some of his later discourses to the disciples, recorded by John, He dwells very fully and strongly on the sorrow they will feel at the loss of their Master, which sorrow was to be succeeded by *joy—lasting joy*—at his return. "Because I have said, I go my way to Him that sent me . . . sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth, it is *expedient* for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him," &c. . . "Ye will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice, and ye will be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into *joy*; . . . and ye now therefore have sorrow; but *I will see you again*, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy *no man taketh* from you." (John, xvi. 6 and 20.)

Now the disciples, it is true, had to spend their lives, for the most part, in trials, dangers, indignities, persecutions, and various kinds of hardship. And some have imagined that the period of "mourning" Jesus alludes to,—“then shall they fast in those days”—denotes this life of suffering which awaited them after his departure in the body. But we greatly wonder that any one should so utterly overlook what is said both by Himself and his Apostles. It would indeed be very natural for an ordinary man to regard as a period of *mourning* that life of privation and hardship to which the first preachers of the Gospel were subjected; but far different, and indeed contrary, was the view which *they* themselves and their great Master took of it. The "*mourning*" He alludes to was not on account of bodily afflictions, but on account of the loss of *Him*, their Lord: which sorrow was to be completely and finally removed; their "*joy no man was to take from them*." But as for worldly troubles and hardships, these were a kind of trial which *He* prepared them *not* to mourn for, but to endure joyfully. "Peace," says He (John xiv.) "I

leave with you ; *my* peace* I give unto you : not as the World giveth, give I unto you. . . . In the World ye shall have tribulation ; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." And again, " Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and shall separate you from their company, and reproach you ; when they shall persecute you for righteousness' sake : rejoice in that day, and leap for joy," &c.

And well did the Apostles learn and practise, and inculcate on their converts, the lesson He had taught them. " My brethren," says the Apostle James, " count it all *joy* when ye fall into divers temptations ;" *i.e.* trials by persecution. " They departed rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame,"† &c. " I am filled," says Paul,‡ " with comfort ; I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation," &c. To the World they might appear " of all men most miserable ;" but they themselves felt quite otherwise ; they were " as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing."

From these and many other passages, but much more still, from the general tone of the New-Testament writers, we may plainly see that the days of " mourning" which our Lord alludes to, cannot have been the life of hardship which awaited the preachers of the Gospel, nor could have had any reference to such outward afflictions. That time of mourning for their Lord's absence, was evidently, first, the interval of desponding sorrow between his crucifixion and his appearance after the Resurrection :§ and, secondly, in a less degree, that interval of comparative loneliness, though cheered by hope,—that twilight following the darkness of despondency, and preceding the restoration of a full sunshine—the interval between the Ascension and the Day of Pentecost : when their Master was restored to them, not in body, but in Spirit, as the " Comforter|| who should abide with them for ever."

In other passages of Scripture, again, fasting and prayer are coupled together, to describe some prolonged exercise of Devotion, in which the mind was so concentrated upon religious subjects, and so engaged in earnest supplication, as to admit of no interruption from any worldly matter—not even the recurrence of

* εἰρήνην τὴν ἐμὴν.

† Acts, v. 41.

‡ 2 Cor. vii. 4.

§ See Luke, xxiv. 17.

|| The title of Paraclete, rendered in the *Gospel* of John " Comforter," is applied to Jesus in the first *Epistle*, in which our Version renders it " Advocate."

an ordinary meal. Such appear to have been the miraculous fasts of Moses, Elijah, and our Lord Himself. Such, in a less degree, the fasting and prayer of Anna, Cornelius, and the Prophets at Antioch. And several other such cases are incidentally recorded in Scripture.

Now how far such prolonged religious exercises may be beneficial to any one, must, of course, depend upon the bodily and mental constitution of him who practises them. Only, it should be borne in mind, that as soon as the cravings of hunger become troublesome, continuing the fast will be an *impediment*, not a *help* to devotion.* Our Lord does not seem to have felt the pangs of hunger *during* his forty days' fast. It was "afterwards" that He was hungered. And when Peter (Acts x. 9) found hunger surprise him during his devotions, he *desired food to be made ready*. Nor should it be forgotten that, in warm climates, long abstinence can be borne with far less inconvenience than in cold ones.

These are cases of *voluntary* fasts; but, in other passages which are very commonly misunderstood, the sacred Writers, when they speak of fasting, mean simply absence of food, or of sufficient food, or of regular meals, without any reference to a *voluntary* act, or any connexion with *religion*.

Such is, for instance, the passage (Acts, xxvii.) where, in the course of the narrative of the storm which Paul and his companions encountered on the voyage to Rome, it is mentioned that they had 'fasted fourteen days, having taken nothing:' by which of course we must understand merely that they had taken no regular meals in all that time, but, in the midst of the unceasing terror, and exertion, and confusion, occasioned by the tempest, had only occasionally snatched a morsel of food sufficient to sustain life.

This kind of distress,—besides many others,—Paul was frequently exposed to in his many sea-voyages and land-journeys, on occasions not recorded in the book of Acts; as we learn from

* "In actions which are less material, such as pride, and envy, and blasphemy, and impenitence, and all the kinds and degrees of malice, external mortifications do so little co-operate to their cure, that oftentimes they are their greatest incentives and inflamers, and are like cordials given to cure the ague; they do their work, but bring a hot fit in its place. And besides that great mortifiers have been soonest assaulted by the spirit of pride, we find that great fasters are naturally angry and choleric. St. Hierome found it in himself, and Ruffinus felt some of the effects of it."—Bishop Taylor. *Life of Christ*. Part I. s. viii. § 17.

his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, (xi. 27,) where he speaks of himself as having been 'in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness,' &c.

That the 'fastings' of which he is here speaking, are of the description just mentioned, and not any kind of religious exercise, is plain from the context; as he is manifestly enumerating, not his devotional practices, but his hardships and trials. His 'fastings' accordingly—amounting occasionally not merely to pain from hunger and thirst, but to distressing famine,—are mentioned, not alone with prayers and meditations, but with 'perils,' and 'stripes,' and 'stoning.' And it is observable also that the 'watchings' which he likewise mentions in the same place, have no reference to any sort of *voluntary* exercise. In our version, indeed, the word corresponds with that in our Lord's exhortation to '*watch* and pray;' but in the Original, quite different words are employed. In the exhortation to 'watch' γρηγορεῖν is to be *vigilant* like a sentinel; in Paul's description of his sufferings, 'watching' (ἀγρυπνία) means 'privation of sleep,'—'want of repose.' And the same words are employed, in the same manner, when he speaks, in another place, of being 'in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in *watchings*, in *fastings*.'*

In the next Caution we intend to point out the deeper and graver errors of the Tract-party, and to show the repugnance of their principles and practice to the teaching of our Saviour and His Apostles. But do not think the time which we have spent in this and the former Caution upon matters of (themselves) less moment, misemployed. It was in such matters of comparatively little moment that the movement *began* which has carried so many over to the Church of Rome. It did not *come to us* from Rome, though it has borne so many thither. These errors and superstitions were not *imported* into England at first; but Romish-like practices and notions sprang up amongst us, and first a *taste* was formed, and then a *craving* came on for things of that sort; and when it was found that our Church could not satisfy that craving, the customers were driven to the Roman market. They first, themselves, shaped the "Image of the

* See Essay on *Christian Self-denial*.

Beast," and then applied to the false Prophet to "make it speak and live."

It has been often observed that, by dressing a bold and high-spirited boy in a scarlet jacket, giving him a tin sword and a pop-gun to play with, and accustoming him to military parade and show, you may give him a taste for real war, and, in the end, make him a soldier. Now, something similar to this has been the case with many of those who have lately become Roman-catholics. They did not assume the Pope's livery, *because* enlisted; but they put on his livery first, and then joined his ranks, in order that they might continue to wear it.

A debate about ceremonies, and outward rites, and points of order, may seem but a trifling thing in itself; but so are, often, to a careless observer, the first symptoms of a malignant fever: and if these be neglected, the disease will gather strength every hour, till, at last, it defies all the skill and assiduity of the physician.

Minds strongly predisposed to superstition may be compared to heavy bodies, just balanced on the verge of a precipice. The slightest touch will send them over; and then the greatest exertion we can make may be insufficient to arrest their fall.

Now, the plea under which this spirit of formalism and superstition first gains influence is, that it is the spirit of our Church. This was the original cry of those very leaders of the Tract-party, who, as soon as they had, by this pretence, gained the influence they sought for, turned round and vilified our Reformers; and are now denouncing as the great enemy of Christ that very Church which they began with praising as his inspired interpreter!

Their first effort was to make *our* Church *Popish*, and themselves its *Popes*; and, when that did not succeed, they abandoned it, and sheltered themselves in the Roman communion; which they are now endeavouring to make even more hopelessly superstitious and intolerant than they found it.

But they have left many successors amongst us who are still trying to play their old game of pretended *Church-principles*—representing their own superstitious and intolerant system as the system of our Church; while too many of the Dissenters are doing all they can to assist them—accepting their misrepresent-

ations as a true picture of our Church's principles, and, under that notion, holding up our Church to the scorn of mankind.

How unrighteous such a proceeding is, we have now shown you. Let us add, that it is most impolitic—nay, *mad*—upon their part. The Dissenters, when they act thus, are venting their rage upon their best Protector; and, if they succeed, they will only succeed in putting a persecuting and superstitious Church-establishment in the place of a mild and liberal one. They will find, as one of themselves allowed, that “the *little finger of Rome* will be thicker than *Canterbury's* loins.”

September, 1851.

No. XI.

"By their fruits ye shall know them."

WHAT has most startled the public in the Tract movement is the discovery of its tendency Romewards. The first disciples of the "Tracts for the Times" believed that they had embarked, under the flag of the "Anglican church," in a safe ship and with trusty pilots, for a pleasant summer cruise around the shores of England. But soon the "Bible and Crown" disappeared from the mast-head, and the "Cross-keys" of St. Peter floated there in its place; the rudder was put about, and the ship was seen crowding all sails for the Roman port.

This has (naturally enough) alarmed many who were at first disposed for the voyage. But this is not the only, or the worst danger. The storm of doubt and uncertainty may seem "hushed" for a while; but it is only waiting "in grim repose" for the proper moment to burst upon its victims when they least expect it; and when that storm comes, the rotten vessel in which they are embarked will assuredly *go down*. It is not the gay streamers on her yards, or the gaudy paint that be-daubs her crazy timbers, or the blustering confidence of her mariners, that can then save her from destruction. Many, it is to be greatly feared, of those who have been induced, in the hopes of gaining at last a fixed and infallible Faith, to go all lengths with this unhappy movement, will find, in the end, that they have flung away, bit by bit, every possible support of Faith, and will arrive not at absolute certainty, but at deplorable scepticism.

Many, again, will, under the influence of Tractite teaching, arrive more quickly still at the same conclusion. They will arrive at total Infidelity without passing through Romanism. They will see at once the *tendency* of the system, and will make one jump to the end which others reach by a circuitous path.

And a much greater number still will have been induced to take refuge from troublesome doubt in apathetic indifference and uninquiring acquiescence, considering that they have the authority of eminent Divines for deeming reflection and investigation worse than useless—for regarding religion as altogether a matter of feeling, and for concluding that if a man keeps up a decorous outward attention to it, such as will impress the minds of the vulgar with a salutary awe, it matters little what may be his inward belief, or whether he have any at all.

For, a strong impression has been produced, and is daily on the increase, that, of that party claiming a special pre-eminence in point of *Faith*, the leaders may, perhaps, many of them, have no belief in what they teach, and the multitude led, no grounds for their belief.

Nor will the existence of this impression surprise you, if you consider some obvious points that must strike every one in their teaching and the manner of it. In the first place, then, the whole tone of the chief leaders of this party seems to show a persuasion that Christianity will not stand the test of close inquiry. They deride as absurd, and censure as profane, and deprecate as hazardous, all attempts to investigate evidence; making faith not the result of evidence, but something opposed to it. One writer (for example) of this party has told us that, in answering the question, why our religion is to be believed, "the poor ignorant uninstructed peasant will probably come nearest to *the answer of the Gospel*. He will say, 'Because I have been told so by those who are wiser and better than myself. My parents told me so, and the clergyman of the parish told me so; and I hear the same whenever I go to church. And I put confidence in these persons because it is natural that I should trust my superiors.'" And then, after some more to the same effect, it is added, that "there is nothing to compare with the logic of such a reply, either intellectually, or morally, or religiously, in all the elaborate defences and evidences which could be produced from Paley, and Grotius, and Sumner, and Chalmers."

And, again, we find the *antiquity* of the Christian Church set forth as the only secure foundation of belief: "till another church has been established, and stood for eighteen hundred years, there can be no argument against Christianity, or against

any part of the church's doctrine, sufficient to counterbalance the argument which we now have in its favour. Testimony, if the right ground of belief, is only to be overthrown by testimony."

Now when we find writers, evidently of some ingenuity, deliberately declaring that the grounds on which the best educated Christians believe in their religion are far *inferior* to those which are the very same that the Pagans had for maintaining *their* belief in opposition to Christianity—inferior, that is, to what is manifestly and notoriously good for nothing—we may well feel a doubt whether these writers are not, in fact, concealed infidels indulging in an ironical sneer. Certainly an infidel could desire nothing better than to find professed Christians deprecating appeals to evidence, and resting their faith on the same ground with that of the Hindoos. For, the religion of the Hindoos has certainly lasted for not less than eighteen hundred years; and a Hindoo is told by his parents, and his priest, and all his superiors, whom it is quite "natural" for him to trust, that his religion is true; and therefore, according to such writers, has better evidence for it than "Paley, and Grotius, and Sumner, and Chalmers" can produce for the Christian religion. As for the Mahometans, if there be any charm in the precise number of *eighteen* centuries, *they* indeed cannot, till the years of their Hejira shall amount to that sum, have exactly *that* claim to put forward. But in the meanwhile they have as good grounds (according to these writers) to go upon, as our forefathers had some centuries back; and they have the "testimony" of Mahomet as to his night-journey to heaven, uncontradicted by any other witness professing to have been there at the time: and they have the admission of professed Christians that "testimony can only be overthrown by testimony!"

And one is the more shocked at such a passage as we have laid before you, when it is put forward as what comes nearest to "the answer of the Gospel"—to the answer which the Apostle Peter directs us to be "ready to give to every one that asketh a reason of the Hope that is in us,"—since it is manifest that when the Gospel was first preached *no* Christian could have given such a reason, and that every one of his Pagan neighbours might, and did.

The truth is, that this kind of (falsely called) Faith, whose usurped title serves to deceive the unthinking, is precisely what is characterized in Scripture as *want* of faith. The unbelieving Jews and Pagans of old were those who rejected the "many infallible proofs" which God set before them, because they had resolved to adhere, at all hazards, to the creed of their fathers, and to take the word of their chief priests or civil magistrates as decisive, and to stop their ears against all evidence, and drown reason by clamour. "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in Him?" "We know that God spake unto Moses; but as for this fellow, we know not whence he is." "Who knoweth not that the city of Ephesus is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter?" "These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, and teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive and observe, being Romans." "As for this sect, we know that *everywhere* it is spoken against."

Now it may surprise some persons, at first, to find gross credulity thus described as *want* of Faith. But if you will consider awhile, you will see clearly that to *disbelieve* a thing is just the same as to *believe* its opposite. To *disbelieve*, for example, the existence of such a man as Julius Cæsar, or as Napoleon Buonaparte, is to *believe* that all the stories told about them are mere fables; which surely requires much more *credulity* than to believe them true. You would think a man very credulous who could be persuaded into a belief that there is no such place as London, and no such person as the Queen, because he would be—in disbelieving these things—believing what was greatly more improbable.

So also, though the terms "infidel" and "unbeliever," are commonly applied to one who rejects Christianity, it is plain that to *disbelieve* its divine origin, is to believe its human origin—to disbelieve that it came from God is the same thing as to believe that it came from Man.

Now when a man of competent ability disbelieves that which he might (if he would consider the matter) see to be the more probable thing, and believes what is the more improbable, it is because he is influenced by some prejudice or other, which keeps him from applying his mind to the real state of the case. Such prejudices are very different in different persons. Some-

times it is love of antiquity ; sometimes love of novelty ; sometimes respect for authority ; sometimes contempt for it ; sometimes complaisance towards others ; sometimes fondness for singularity, and love of opposition. Sometimes we feel that the thing proposed to us is " too good news to be true ;" sometimes we shrink from believing it true because it is disagreeable. But, in all cases, these prejudices produce want of genuine Faith—that is, they keep the mind from attending calmly to the evidence, and determining, by the weight of that, first our judgment, and then our conduct.

Now some of these prejudices may be more culpable in themselves than others ; some may be feelings which it is wrong to cherish at all, and others may be, when in their right place, even highly laudable : but still, considered as prejudices obstructing rational faith, they are all culpable for the same reason, because they hinder the mind from judging according to the evidence.

In what light, then, do these writers place the Apostles of Christ, when they represent them to us as saying : " Believe *us* on our own words ; but reject the authority of all other teachers. Submit yourselves implicitly to *Christian* Priests, but refuse submission to any other Priesthood. Let no succeeding generation call in question the traditions of its christian ancestors. Let each receive quietly the religion handed down by its fathers : but let *this* generation act otherwise. Take up *novelty* for this once, to oblige us, and ever after adhere to *antiquity*."

It is most manifest that the writers of the New Testament never show any inclination to commend a credulous disposition *universally*. They never lay it down as a *general* rule that " men should begin with believing ;" that " they should believe first, and prove afterwards." They never (as some persons who style themselves christian moralists have done) commend the Heathens for trusting to the legends of their mythology, or the Jewish populace for cleaving to the traditions of the Elders. They never make it a *general* duty for *all* subjects to take on trust the religion which the governors and priests of their religion chuse to impose. On the contrary, the christian religion made its appearance as the common disturber of the peace of the world, which put an end to the tranquil influence of custom, authority, credulity, sentiment, and imagination ; forced men

upon the disagreeable task of examining evidence, searching records, and "proving all things," and arrayed, in opposite opinions, children against their parents, subjects against their princes, and the people against the priest.

Whose work, then, are those persons doing, who would persuade men that Christ's Apostles nevertheless designed to make that same blind credulity the support of their religion, which had been the support of all the error and superstition of the Pagan world? Is it not plain that such inconsistency on the part of the founders of our religion would convict them at once of dishonesty?

Accordingly, Infidels are always glad and eager to accept* as correct such an account of Gospel Faith as confounds it with credulity; and if you point out how inconsistent it would be, in the Apostles, to *require* blind submission in Christians, while they *blamed* it in Jews and Pagans, an infidel has, of course, a ready answer. He will say, and say truly, that almost all fanatical impostors are more or less thus inconsistent—boldly demanding from men an uninquiring submission to their own upstart sovereignty, while they despise all authority except their own. He will observe, that it is no unusual thing for him, who is the most unrelenting tyrant in his own dominions, to stir up sedition abroad among the natural subjects of another prince; and that the first teachers of Christianity may have employed Inquiry, as an engine to break up the foundations of other systems, without intending that the same lever should be applied to theirs.

Thus the infidel, indeed, may answer, and with some colour of plausibility. But a professed Christian cannot decently avail himself of the same reply. "With the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured unto you again," was the warning which the Founder of Christianity gave to his disciples; and no believers in his divine mission can hold consistently that his religion stands upon an arbitrary claim to implicit faith in that one solitary instance, combined with an equally arbitrary denial of it in all others;—that, having overturned

* We have given, at the end of this Caution, in parallel columns, the words of Mr. Hume, the famous Infidel, placed side by side, with those of two professedly christian writers—one a Tractite—another belonging to a very different school—and with those of the Inspired Writers. Mark how well the first three agree; and how different is the language of Christ and his Apostles.

by free inquiry all other systems which rested upon such a claim, He should have designed to place his own upon the same basis.

And if we look at the matter of fact, we shall see plainly that He never had any such intention. For not only did Christianity break up existing systems by setting at nought the plea of authority in their favour, and disturbing the easy acquiescence of implicit faith, but, from the first, its teachers put forward its own claims upon the ground of *evidence*, and challenged an examination of that evidence.

We need not now remind you how frequently, all through the Gospels, our Lord Himself appeals to the Jewish Scriptures—to the testimony of John—to the miracles which He himself wrought, as the proper evidence of his divine mission. But the way in which the Gospel *continues* to be published in the Acts of the Apostles is equally worthy of remark.

If the Apostles had thought that the best way of settling the christian religion in men's minds was, first of all to establish their own authority as the Heads of the Church, and thus secure from all Christians, as such, an equally implicit dependence on all that they might teach, we should find their *authority*, as the guides of faith, put in the foremost place throughout their teaching. "Believe in *us*, the infallible guides of the Catholic Church," would have been the first grand article proposed to all men's faith. And then, all other articles would have been set forth on their *authority*. But it was not thus that the Apostles really proceeded. They came forward, in the first place, much rather as WITNESSES than as authoritative guides. Their character of *witnesses* who had seen and heard the Lord, and who, therefore, could *testify* to what they had seen and heard, is plainly the foremost part in their notion of their own office; and they work miracles and appeal to Scripture not so much for the purpose of establishing their own right to deliver doctrines, as to *prove* the doctrines which they teach. "They preach," in short, "not *themselves*, but Christ Jesus to be *the Lord*, and themselves as *our servants* for Jesus' sake."

Nor is there the trace of a provision made for the subsequent propagation of their religion by other means than the statement of rational evidence: while, in this way, large provision *is* made. The four Gospels (not to speak now of occasional passages in the Epistles) are four distinct statements of evidence of matter-of-

fact, put forward as such, and laid before the judgment of mankind; so that—except we carefully take such writings out of men's hands—we cannot, even if we would, avoid having the question of the truth of Christianity *forced* upon men's minds as a question of evidence, appealing for examination to the reader. No well-informed Christian doubts that the authors of the four Gospels wrote under the extraordinary superintendence of the Holy Spirit; yet it is not as the organs of inspiration they come forward. Their language is not—"Thus saith the Lord:" but "He that *saw it* bare witness:"—"These things were delivered unto us by those who, from the beginning, were *ministers and eye-witnesses of the word.*"

And the reason for this way of proceeding is not hard to find. The sacred Writers were doubtless well aware that, to a mind searching for rational evidence, their character as *witnesses and faithful relators* must be established first; that, in establishing the truth of the facts which they relate, we cannot fairly set out with assuming the inspiration of the historians: and that such a mind would indignantly spurn from it any attempt to supply defects in the proper evidence of matters-of-fact by the arrogant interposition of authority, would refuse (and rightly refuse) to listen to such language as religious teachers too often use—"Here is proof for you; but that it *is* proof, you must take on my word. Here is an argument; but don't presume to examine its validity." That they have, in fact, then, so shaped their writings as to meet this difficulty,—to avoid what the method of authority would require, and force forward what the method of examination would demand—this seems to show pretty clearly their intention that the religion which they preached upon the ground of evidence, should be maintained and propagated also on the same ground.

Now, if the special character of the Apostles of the Lord was that of "witnesses to what they had seen and heard," and declarers of what was *immediately delivered* to them by Christ Himself, it is manifest that men's faith was grounded upon their word in a way in which it cannot be grounded upon the word of their pretended successors, who do not and cannot make any claim to this the special and foremost part of the Apostolic-Office. And since this character of *witnesses* could belong only to men living in the *first age* of the Church, and yet was

the grand character of the Apostolic-Office—these two circumstances taken together, remove all presumption in favour of the *continuance* of such an office in the Church. The faith of those who depend on the authority of *living* guides, now, is plainly quite different from the faith of the early Christians, who relied upon the testimony of the competent *witnesses* who were *then* living. While, on the contrary, *we*, who ground our faith upon the testimony of those same witnesses, preserved for us in the writings of the New Testament,—we it is that really follow the example of the early Church, and are “built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone.”

“But did not our Lord teach as *one having authority*? and is not the Church to follow the example of her Master?” Yes, where his conduct is set before us as our *example*, there we are to follow it; but we are not to make those things our example which were peculiar to Him.

We may follow, for instance, the example of patience which He has set us in his last sufferings; but it would be the height of impiety to pretend that we were, at the same time, following his example in “bearing the sins of many,” and “making atonement for the transgressors;” because God has nowhere promised to accept our sufferings as a propitiation for the sins of others.

But as it would be impious to usurp Christ’s office of Priest without being able to show that we were (like Him) “called of God,” so it is impious also to usurp his office of Prophet, without being able, like Him, to exhibit the credentials of a divine ambassador.

We must, then, in striving to imitate our Lord’s example, consider the circumstances under which He acted, and compare them with those under which *we* are called upon to act. For when two persons are placed in different circumstances, one of them, when seeking to take pattern from the other, may attempt this so unwisely as to depart from the model, instead of following it. The one may be acting suitably to the position *he* occupies, and the circumstances *he* is placed in, and the other—the injudicious imitator—may be acting *unsuitably* to his own. A private citizen, for instance, who would profit by the example of some wise and good king, must do so by rightly discharging the duties of a *private* citizen: not by assuming the demeanour

and functions of a sovereign. So also if a clergyman is leading what is called an *exemplary* life—that is, one which sets a good example, a layman who should so imitate him as to take upon himself the ministerial duties which pertain to the clerical profession, would, by that very act, be departing from his proposed model. And, in like manner, any one who should have received an immediate divine revelation, as a messenger from heaven, would be authorized and bound to discharge that office in a manner which would be absurdly and impiously presumptuous in one not so inspired and so sent.

Now the ground upon which our Lord rested his claim to be listened to and obeyed—the *foundation* of that “authority” with which He spake, was the display of miraculous powers. “The works,” said He, “which I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me.” “If I had not done among them the works that none other man did, they had not had sin;” and again, “If the mighty works which have been done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes;” and, “If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.”

It is evident, therefore, that if Christ’s ministers should attempt (blindly) to imitate Him by assuming an authority that belongs not to *uninspired* Man, they would be, in fact, departing from his example. And the people, also, if they were to admit any such groundless pretensions of fallible men, would be departing the most widely from the example of Christ’s disciples. For these disciples received the Gospel, not on the bare word of human teachers, but on the evidence which God was pleased to afford—the testimony He bore to his inspired messengers, “with demonstration (as Paul expresses it) of the Holy Ghost and with power”—that is, with the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit proving the reality of their divine mission. And it is plain that a blind and credulous deference to any assumed or imagined authority of fallible men, must be as opposite to a well-grounded faith in God’s inspired and duly accredited messengers, as the superstitious veneration of the Pagans for their idols, is, to the right worship of the true God.

And yet, as there is in the religions of Pagans a certain degree of external, deceptive resemblance to true religion—such as that of counterfeit coin to genuine—so the usurped or fancied

authority of fallible men has an outward and deceitful likeness to the legitimate authority rightfully claimed by the Son of God: and the irrational implicit submission of *their* followers resembles, at the first glance, the humble faith and obedience of those who followed Christ and his Apostles. In both cases, there is a confident and resigned submission of the understanding and will to the guidance of a supposed divine authority; even as the worshippers of Baal and of Jehovah—of Mahomet and of Christ—may be alike in reverent adoration and devoted trust, though differing in the essential point of truth or falsehood. The stamp and outward form of counterfeits and of genuine coin are alike—even *more* alike than two pieces of *gold* stamped differently; though, inwardly, the base metal and the gold differ in the real and essential point.

And so it is with false and genuine Faith. They are very much alike in outward semblance. But look more closely, and you will find that they differ in this all-important point—that false faith is a rash and unreasonable submission of the will and understanding to an authority whose just claim to that submission is not established; true faith is a deliberate and rational submission to the guidance of an authority *proved* by sufficient evidence to be divine.

But “how can you expect”—will be the question urged by some, when these considerations are laid before them—“how can you expect that the mass of mankind—poor and illiterate people—should ever be made to understand the rational evidences of Christianity? Such evidences, no doubt, there are; and it may be very proper to recur to them, with educated people, whenever doubts arise that cannot be otherwise satisfied. But the lower classes must, if they are to believe at all, be trained to believe upon human authority. If you suffer *them* to question at the outset the claims of their teachers, there is an end of all submission at once.”

But those who argue thus, forget entirely that when Christianity was first set up, the Gospel was (by God’s own direction) “preached to the poor” upon the ground of rational evidence; and that if the lower classes had *then* (as many of them did) stuck blindly to the teaching of their superiors—as these objectors now encourage them to do—and had refused to judge for themselves, and had shrunk from the presumption of ques-

tioning the claims of their "natural guides," they could never have become Christians at all; since, it is evident that, in the Apostles' times, and indeed for a long time after, the majority of the "wise and learned" rejected Christianity.

Many, too, of those who speak thus of the impossibility of making the lower classes *at home* understand the evidences of Christianity,* are very zealous to send missionaries to pagan people *abroad* to convert them to the Christian religion. Now they can hardly suppose that the mass of pagan idolaters in India, or China, or the South-sea Islands, are better educated than the mass of own people in these countries; nor again, that pagans can be led to reject the authority of their own priests and civil governors, and to embrace the Christian religion, without some *reason* being given them for the change.

It is true, indeed, that some heathen people really *are* so uncivilized that, if left in that rude state, it *would* be impossible to make them understand the evidences, or even the nature, of Christianity. But when intelligent missionaries have to deal with people in such a deplorable state of ignorance, they begin with endeavouring to educate them. They teach them, if necessary, the common arts of life; then open schools for young persons, whom they train up to exercise their minds; and so fit them to understand the religion which they lay before them.

Just so should we proceed at home. If there be many in these countries who are so uneducated and ignorant as to be unable to understand the evidences of their religion, even when patiently explained to them, that is a disgrace which we should try, as soon as possible, to wipe off. Give them the education which is their right as rational Beings. Do not copy the example of the slave-master, who first makes and keeps his wretched victims brutes, and then alleges *that* brutal condition as an excuse for perpetuating their slavery.

"But after all," it will be replied, "ignorant people are better off in their ignorance, than with any such imperfect education as we could give them. We *must*, indeed, argue with the heathens,

* After all, the best proof of the possibility of this is the matter of fact. You have now before you the *tenth* edition of a little book, *Introductory Lessons on Christian Evidences*, (John W. Parker & Son, London,) which has been found, by pretty large experience, capable of accomplishing that very thing, which the persons noticed above pronounce impossible. Besides being reprinted in America, it has been, for several years, translated into French, Italian, Spanish, Welsh, German, Romaine [Modern Greek], Armenian, Polish, and Bohemian.

because we cannot otherwise get them to change their religion. But we do not want to *convert* our own people to any new faith; and the effect of talking to them about the evidences of Christianity, or turning their thoughts to the time when it was a *new* religion, will be to raise doubts, and shake their habitual faith in it as an *unquestionable* authority."

Perhaps so, we reply; but, if that be a good reason for leaving them without rational evidence, then we should, as far as possible, discourage them from reading—or at least from understanding—the *New Testament*; since no one who reads *that*, and reflects on what he reads, can help having his thoughts directed to the first origin of Christianity, and the way in which it was propagated by its first teachers; and it requires but a very small degree of intelligence to perceive that it cannot be reasonable to say—"You should believe what the Apostles said, because they proved their authority by miracles: but that they really said these things, and really wrought such miracles, that you are to take on *our* authority without any proof at all. You, in short, are to believe just on the same grounds and after the same manner as the men did who, *you are told in this book*, crucified Jesus Christ and persecuted his Apostles."

It is quite true, however, that Christianity is open to many—and, some of them perplexing, objections; and that, thinking of it as a thing *to be proved* will naturally suggest such objections to men's minds. But who is to be blamed if such be the inevitable consequence of the constitution of things? The Almighty might (as far as we can see) have taken other means of propagating his gospel. He might (as poor mad Rousseau demanded) have written his Revelation upon the sky, or engraved it, like the axioms of mathematics, upon the understanding of mankind; though, even then, it would not have been beyond the reach of cavil, since many puzzling *objections* have been brought against the first truths of mathematical and physical science. But He has *not* done so: and because *He* has not done so, we humbly conclude that it was not *fit* that it should be done; and that the way which Infinite Wisdom has chosen is, on the whole, the best.

Such evidence then as God has provided us with, we are bound to use ourselves, and lay before our brethren. For all the consequences of what *He* has been pleased to do, *we* are

not responsible; but we *are* responsible for all the consequences of what *we* presume to do in altering his arrangements.

And what have been those consequences?

Men have been trained to adhere to whatever religion they were brought up in, without having, or seeking, any grounds for it, but that so they have been told; and all inquiry—all exercise of thought on religious subjects—has been discouraged. They have been exhorted to “hide under a bushel” the lamp of Reason which a kind Providence has bestowed on Man. And what have been the results?

Some—not a few—have listened to the idle tales of crazy enthusiasts, or crafty impostors, who gabbled unmeaning sounds, which they profanely called “the gift of tongues;” or who pretended to have discovered in a cave a new Book of Scripture, called the *Book of Mormon*, and which they assured their deluded followers contains a divine revelation. And they are believed (why not?) by those who have not only never heard of any reason why *our* Scriptures should be received as containing a divine revelation, but have been taught that it is presumptuous to seek for any, and that they ought to believe whatever is told them.

Others, again, have been strongly assured that the Traditions of those who call themselves “*the Catholic Church*” are of equal authority with Scripture. And this they believe *because* they are *earnestly assured* of it; which is the only ground they ever had, or conceive themselves permitted to have, for believing anything.

Others, again, when exposed to the seduction of infidels, finding that *these* do urge *something* in the shape of arguments, and that they have nothing to urge on the opposite side, conclude at once that the religion they have been taught is a fable. For they not only have been supplied by their religious instructors with “no reason for their hope,” but have even been assured by them that all inquiry, and all exercise of their rational faculties on the subject, will be likely to lead to infidelity; which is, apparently, an admission that the christian System will not stand examination.

We would earnestly entreat, therefore, any such teacher as those we have alluded to, to imagine himself confronted, at the Day of Judgment, with some of those misled people, and to

consider what answer he would make if these should reproach him with the errors into which they had fallen. Let him conceive them saying, "you have, through false and self-devised views of expediency,—in professed imitation of the Sacred Writers, but in real contradiction of their practice,—sent forth us your weak brethren,—*made* weaker by yourself—as "sheep among wolves," provided with the "harmlessness of the dove," but not, with "the wisdom of the serpent;" unfurnished with the arms which God's gifts, of Scripture and of Reason would have supplied to us, and *purposely* left naked to the assaults of various enemies. OUR BLOOD IS ON YOUR HEAD! You must be accountable for our fall."

Thus we have laid before you some of the bitter fruits of this miserable teaching. But these are not all. We intend soon to resume the subject, and supply you with further evidence of its mischievous tendency.

See Note, p. 202.]

"Upon the whole, we may conclude that the christian Religion not only was at first attended with miracles, but even at this day cannot be believed by any reasonable person without one. Mere reason is insufficient to convince us of its veracity; and whoever is moved by Faith to assent to it, is conscious of a continued miracle in his own person, which subverts all the principles of his understanding, and gives him a determination to believe what is most contrary to custom and experience." — *Hume's Essay on Miracles*, (at the end.)

* * we are to be censured for having "shifted the ground of our belief from testimony to argument, and from faith to reason." * * *

In answering the question why our religion is to be believed, "The poor ignorant uninstructed peasant will probably come nearest to the answer of the Gospel. He will say, because I have been told so by those who are wiser and better than myself. My parents told me so, and the clergyman of the parish told me so; and I hear the same whenever I go to church. And I put confidence in these persons, because it is natural that I should trust my superiors. I have never had reason to suspect that they would deceive me. I hear of persons who contradict and abuse them, but they are not such persons as I would wish to follow in any other matter of life, and therefore not in religion. I was born and baptized in the church, and the Bible tells me to stay in the church, and obey its teachers; and till I have equal authority for believing that it is not the Church of Christ, as it is the Church of England, I intend to adhere to it. Now, such reasoning as this will appear to this rational age very paltry and unsatisfactory: and yet the logic is as sound as the spirit is humble. And there is nothing to compare with it either intellectually, or morally, or religiously, in all the elaborate defences and evidences which would be produced from Paley, and Grotius, and Sumner, and Chalmers." — *British Critic*.

"The sacred writers have none of the timidity of their modern apologists. They never sue for an assent to their doctrines, but authoritatively command the acceptance of them. They denounce unbelief as guilt, and insist on faith as a virtue of the highest order. In their catholic invitations, the intellectual not less than the social distinctions of mankind, are unheeded. Every student of their writings is aware of these facts, &c. * * * They presuppose that vigour of understanding may consist with feebleness of reason; and that the power of discriminating between religious truth and error does not depend chiefly on the culture or on the exercise of the mere argumentative faculty. The special patrimony of the poor and illiterate—the Gospel—has been the stay of countless millions who never framed a syllogism; of the great multitudes who, before and since the birth of Grotius, have lived in the peace and died in the consolations of our Faith, how small is the proportion of those whose convictions have been derived from the study of works like his. Of the numbers who have addicted themselves to such studies, how small is the proportion of those who have brought to the task either learning, or leisure, or industry, sufficient, &c. * * * He who lays the foundation of his faith on such evidences will too commonly end either in yielding a credulous and therefore an infirm assent, or in reposing in a self-sufficient and far more hazardous incredulity." — *Edinburgh Review*.

"This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested his glory, and his disciples believed on Him."

"We know that thou art a teacher sent from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him."

"If I had not done among them the works that none other man did, they had not had sin."

"The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me."

"Him God raised up and showed Him openly; not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen afore of God, even to us," &c.

"To Him bear all the Prophets witness."

"Be always ready to give to every one that asketh you, a reason of the hope that is in you," &c.

No. XII.

"I am pure from the blood of all men; for I have not shunned to declare unto
you ALL THE COUNSEL OF GOD."

THOSE parallel columns printed at the end of the last Number, were meant as only a specimen. Several more might have been added, from writers, some of greater, and some of less note; widely differing from each other in most points, yet wonderfully agreeing in the one point—that of decrying christian evidences wherein they disagree with the sacred writers:

Weak and credulous enthusiasts, fancying themselves inspired, of course decry everything addressed to sober-minded rational men.

Those infidels, again, who regard *all* Christians as weak and credulous, deride the idea of their faith being founded on rational conviction.

Those, again, who are convinced of the *usefulness* of Christianity, but yet have a lurking suspicion that it will not bear inquiry, naturally deprecate inquiry, both for themselves and others.

Moreover, those who fancy themselves very exalted *philosophers*, are resolved to believe whatever they do believe on some peculiar grounds of their own,—some reasonings not intelligible to the vulgar. And they cannot endure the idea of being convinced of a religion on such evidence as would satisfy any twelve jurymen of plain sense.

Then, again, those who wish their people to believe—*besides* the truth of Christianity—a great deal *more*, which they are aware cannot be supported by like proofs—these do not like that men should acquire a *habit* of seeking and obtaining good reasons for their belief, lest they should demand the same on *all* points; and therefore they wish them to take *all* on trust.

Thus, from different causes, men quite different from each

other in many respects, are found exhibiting this strange agreement; an agreement between the avowed opponents and the professed followers of Christianity.

But we are now immediately concerned with this dislike of rational evidence as a "fruit" of Tractite teaching. In this view we examined it in the last Caution, and found that to deprecate, as they do, the investigation of christian evidence, is unreasonable and unscriptural. But it is a *poisonous* fruit too, and dangerous in more ways than one.

First, the mere absence of good proof, as the foundation of faith, is highly dangerous to him who is thus left without "a reason for the hope that is in him." A faith which is based upon deliberate and rational conviction, has a life and reality that are seldom found in that languid kind of belief which springs from the mere *habit* of assenting to what is taught. Examining the evidences of Christianity brings the truth of it before us as *real facts*: it proves them to us in the same way that other facts are proved in which we are practically interested. While, on the other hand, if we are trained to receive them implicitly in a way that no other important truths of ordinary life are received, we shall be apt to assent to them with but little feeling of their reality, and with a dim, dreamy kind of belief that has small influence on practice.

And even where this is not so, there will still be the danger we pointed out in the last Caution, of adopting the most pernicious errors with the same readiness and earnestness as truth, from finding them urged upon us with the same solemnity of asseveration as the creed in which we have been trained. Nay, the chances are, that new and monstrous errors will be embraced and followed out, in such cases, with far more earnestness than old and sober truths; because the very novelty and strangeness of the *false* doctrines will stimulate the fancy and feelings more strongly than the true ones, which we were accustomed to from our childhood.

But, *secondly*, if a man has been taught that it is dangerous to *seek* for evidence, this is likely to raise a suspicion that there is no good evidence. If there be a studied avoidance, in any society, of mentioning a particular person, and a discouragement of all inquiries about him, it will raise a suspicion that he is known to be dead, or fallen into some disgrace, but that his

death or misfortune is concealed. And so, if there be a general agreement in the Church to suppress every question about evidence, and to frown at any allusion to that subject, this will make intelligent persons doubt whether there is really any good evidence at all to be produced.

Such *suspicions* of the hollowness of the whole system of Christianity are much more common than you might at first imagine. And the mischief is, that they are the most likely to cross the mind just then when we most need all the strength of an active faith, and just then to paralyze its powers. These suspicions may lurk unperceived, for a long time, in a corner of the mind, while all goes on quietly; but when the soul is stirred by some strong temptation to do wrong, or the pressure of some affliction which might throw one into despondency—that is just the moment when they will emerge and come to the surface. And that, you will observe, is just the most dangerous moment. Just when we are exerting all the force of our better principles to put down some rebellious appetite, or wrong desire, or faithless misgiving, the devil will come behind us and whisper:—“But after all, the whole thing may be an imposture; and what reason have you ever seen for thinking it otherwise?” And the effect will too often be, that faith will lose its hold, and the temptation for the time prevail.

But many people are led into the error of fancying that an irrational faith is even firmer than a rational one, by mistaking for a firm belief, a firm resolution of the *will* to believe. They seem to imagine that faith can be made firm only by a sort of brute force upon the understanding, and by *brow-beating*, as it were, their own minds and those of others into implicit submission.

Now you never see traces of this kind of violence in the case of other truths which men really believe most firmly. You never hear a man protesting with great vehemence that he is convinced that the angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, or that the earth is round like a ball and not flat like a platter, and denouncing all who cannot see the proof. Good proof *satisfies* the mind of itself, and excludes reasonable doubt without any violent effort. When you are sure that the door is strong enough to keep out an intruder, you sit quietly by your fireside, and let him kick his heels against it till he is tired.

But if you rushed over, and clapped your back and shoulders to the bolt, that would imply that the door is really weak, or, at least, that your faith in it is weak—that is, that you had not full confidence in its strength.

These vehement protestations, however, in matters of religion, will often impose on a man's self as well as on others; and people often persuade themselves that a dislike to evidence proceeds from a horror and disgust at the very idea of a doubt being expressed—at having their faith brought, as it were, to trial.

But, in the meanwhile, they are in effect substituting for several of these merely *apparent* doubts, one great and real doubt which pervades the whole. If a man never will have the foundations of his house examined, though there may really be no unsoundness, his family will be in a state of perpetual uneasiness: for they never can be sure that all is right. They may not actually suspect unsoundness, but they cannot be sure that there is none.

Many persons, however, seem to feel as if there must be something painful and even revolting to a pious mind, in having its attention frequently directed to the evidences of Christianity. They say that talking of its truth suggests the idea of Christianity being possibly false; which is a hateful thought, and to be banished immediately from the mind.

Now it is, indeed, of vast importance, that all distrust of the truth of Christianity should be banished from the mind: and for that very reason, it should be delightful to us to dwell upon those numerous and strong proofs of its truth which do effectually banish all such distrust, by giving us a reasonable conviction that such a religion must come from God. Whereas, to banish these thoughts by a strong effort of the will, and by violently turning away the mind from them, is to take a course which (so far as it is successful) would serve equally to confirm us in the belief of anything, however absurd, and which is likely to increase, instead of allaying, the uneasiness of many minds.

No one, in ordinary life, considers it disagreeable to mark, and dwell on, the constantly recurring proofs of the excellent and admirable qualities of some highly-valued friend—to observe how his character stands in strong contrast to that of ordinary

men—and that, while experience is constantly stripping off the fair outside from vain pretenders, and detecting the wrong motives which adulterate the seeming virtue of others, his sterling excellence is made more and more striking and conspicuous every day. On the contrary, we feel that this is a delightful exercise of the mind, and the more delightful the more we are disposed to love and honour him.

Should it not, then, be also delightful to a sincere Christian to mark, in like manner, the proofs which, if he look for them, he will continually find recurring, that the religion he professes came not from man, but from God—that the Great Master whom he adores was indeed “the Way, the Truth, and the Life”—that “never man spake like this man”—and that the sacred Writers who record his teaching were not mad enthusiasts, or crafty deceivers, but men who spoke in sincerity the words of truth and soberness which they learned from Him? Should he not feel the liveliest pleasure in comparing his religion with those false creeds which have sprung from human fraud and folly, and observing how striking is the difference?

And so also in what is called Natural Theology—the proofs of the wisdom, goodness and power of God—how delightful to a pious mind is the contemplation of the evidence which it presents! What pleasure to trace, as far as we can, the countless instances of wise contrivance which surround us in the objects of nature—the great and the small—from the fibres of an insect’s wing, to the structure of the most gigantic animals—from the minutest seed that vegetates, to the loftiest trees of the forest—and to mark everywhere the work of that same Creator’s hand who has filled the universe with the monuments of his wisdom!

“Yes,” it may be said, “all this *is* delightful as long as the mind is fixed only on the evidence *for* religion. But what we deprecate is, taking notice of objections to Christianity. To dwell upon the arguments *against it* must surely be painful to every pious mind: and to suggest such things to others, is likely to fill them with alarm, and raise suspicions that cannot be easily allayed.”

Now, it must be confessed that it *is* unpleasant to hear the character of one whom we esteem disparaged; but, where we feel that we have sure grounds for our esteem, that displeasure

is excited by the folly or baseness of his accusers, not by distrust of his integrity. We feel no alarm, in such a case, at the prospect of the most rigid scrutiny. On the contrary, our only dread is lest it should not be rigid enough. And any disgust we may experience in having to deal with the charges brought against him is greatly overbalanced by our satisfaction at finding his character pass through the fiery ordeal uninjured, and come out even brighter than before.

Now such should also be our feeling with respect to objections to Christianity. If Christianity be, indeed, true, its advocates may safely court investigation; and we shall find (as men have found hitherto in a thousand instances) that the seeming objections will turn out in the end strong corroborations of its evidence.

"Well, but," it is said, "though that course may be the best for well-read and skilful Divines, it is better not to notice objections *generally*, for fear of alarming and unsettling the minds of plain, unlearned people, who had probably never heard of anything of the kind. Let them continue to read their Bible without being disturbed by any doubts or suspicions that might make them uneasy."

Now, if in some sea-chart for the use of mariners, the various rocks and shoals which a vessel has to pass in a certain voyage, were to be wholly omitted, and no notice taken of them, no doubt many persons might happen to make the voyage safely, and with a comfortable feeling of security, from not knowing at all of the existence of any such dangers. But suppose some one did strike on one of these rocks, from not knowing—though the makers of the chart did—of its existence, and consequently perished in a shipwreck which he might have been taught to avoid, on whose head would his blood lie?

And again, if several voyagers came to suspect, from vague rumours, that rocks and shoals (perhaps more formidable than the real ones) did lie in their course, without any correct knowledge where they lay, or how to keep clear of them, then, so far from enjoying freedom from apprehension, they would be exposed to increased alarm, and much of it needless alarm, without being, after all, preserved from danger.

And so it is in the present case. Vague hints that learned men have objected to such and such things, and have questioned

this or that, often act like an inward slow-corroding canker in the minds of some who have never read or heard anything distinct on the subject; and who, for that very reason, are apt to imagine these objections &c. to be much more formidable than they really are. For there are people of perverse mind, who, really possessing both learning and ingenuity, will employ these to dress up in a plausible form something which is, in truth, perfectly silly: and the degree to which this is sometimes done, is what no one can easily conceive without actual experience and examination.

It is, therefore, often useful, in dealing even with the unlearned, to take notice of groundless and fanciful theories and interpretations, contained in books which probably most of them will never see, and which some of them perhaps will never even hear of; because many persons are a good deal influenced by reports, and obscure rumours, of the opinions of some supposed learned man, without knowing distinctly what they are; and are likely to be made uneasy and distrustful by being assured that this or that has been disputed, and so and so maintained, by some person of superior knowledge and talents, who has proceeded on "rational" grounds; when, perhaps, they themselves are qualified by their own plain sense to perceive how *ir-rational* these fanciful notions are, and to form a right judgment on the matters in question.

Suppose you were startled in a dark night by something that looked like a spectre in a winding-sheet, would not he who should bring a lantern, and show you that it was nothing but a white cloth hanging on a bush, give you far better encouragement than he who merely exhorted you to "look another way, keep up your heart, whistle, and pass on?"

The truth is, that multitudes are haunted by the spectres, as it were, of vague surmises and indefinite suspicions, which continue thus to haunt them, just because they *are* vague and indefinite,—because the mind has never ventured to look them boldly in the face, and put them into a shape in which reason can examine them. "Suspensions," says Bacon, "among thoughts, are like bats among birds; they fly by twilight."

Now would it not be an act of great charity towards such persons to persuade them to cast away their unreasonable timidity, and scrutinize such objections, instead of trying to

banish them by force? For though, no doubt, *some* difficulties and objections will always remain that cannot be *directly* cleared up or answered, yet the vastly greatest number of seeming objections and difficulties can be satisfactorily removed by careful examination and increased knowledge; and the experience of this will lead us to be confident, that if we could proportionately enlarge our faculties and acquirements, (which is what we may hope for in a better world,) the rest would vanish also. And, in the meanwhile, it is of great importance to know exactly what they are, lest our fancies should unduly magnify their number and weight, and also in order to make us see that they are as nothing in comparison of the still greater difficulties on the opposite side; namely, the objections which we should have to encounter, if we *rejected* Christianity.

Still, many will comfort themselves with the idea that the great mass of mankind will quietly take their religion on trust, and believe it on the authority of the wise, and learned, and good men who teach it them. "It might be better," some will say, "if men were more enlightened; and they may now perhaps be exposed to dangers from which greater knowledge and intelligence would save them: but still they do hold the truth, and hold it firmly, on this authority—the authority of those their pastors."

Perhaps so;—but then this *authority* must be based on conviction of the *sincerity* as well as the intelligence of their teachers. If a man is ever so good in other respects, yet if it be believed, or even suspected, that he thinks it right to teach something different from his real inward sentiments, his goodness is no ground for security; and his learning and ability will only make him the more fitted for imposing on the multitude.

Now this suspicion is that which is actually fostered by the very persons we have been alluding to in the former and in the present Caution. They directly play into the hands of infidels, not only by taking away every other foundation for christian faith except human authority, but by themselves totally subverting even this frail one, through their doctrine and practice of "Reserve"—"Economy"—"Phenakism," or "Double-doctrine."

How much of practical insincerity there had been in the management of the "Tracts for the Times" did not, indeed,

fully appear till after the publication had come abruptly to an end; but those tracts did not come to an end before they had announced principles which ought to have fully *prepared* men for the disclosures that followed.

The writer of Tracts eighty and eighty-seven, for instance, put forward pretty plainly as his view, that the doctrines of Christianity were committed to the custody of the clergy, not in order that they might be made "fully known" to all men, but to be "dispensed" or "reserved" by them as they should see fitting. Christianity, according to him, has recognised and adopted a principle which, as he truly remarks,* is "to be traced throughout *the heathen world* in some shape or other," of separating men into two classes, the *initiated* and the *un-initiated*; and revealing to the first—the initiated—certain important matters which are more or less kept secret from the others. And of doctrines, the plain and full statement of which might be advantageously thus "reserved" for a select class, he went on to give instances in the DIVINITY and ATONEMENT of our Lord. Men, it would seem, according to this writer, should first *qualify* themselves to make a good and reverend use of such sacred truths as these by the diligent practice of self-denial, humility, and charity, before they can be worthy receivers of a plain statement of them; and the Clergy—the teachers of the Church—were to be the judges when, and how far, men are thus qualified for "initiation." And as to the generality of persons, it was left at least very doubtful whether they ever *could* be fit for having these things plainly taught them. It was suggested, on the one hand, that words and symbols and ceremonies *implying* these doctrines, might have a "most profitable practical effect upon the unlearned, like spells and incantations, *without being understood* ;† and, on the other, that we have many other better ways, than teaching these mysterious doctrines, for producing a religious life;—as, for example, "preaching judgment to come, natural piety, common honesty, repentance; by urging those assistances to poverty of spirit which Scripture

* *Tract lxxxvii.* p. 11. The reader is strongly recommended to furnish himself with a very useful little book, the *INDEX to the Tracts for the Times*.

† "For, as *incantations* have a natural power, so that he that *understands them not*, yet derives something from them, according to the character of the sounds, whether it be to his hurt or the healing of his body or soul, so let him understand that more powerful than any incantations are the words of divine Scripture."—Quoted, with approval, from Origen, *Tract lxxxvii.* p. 31.

recommends, and the Church prescribes, such as fasting and alms, and the necessity of reverent and habitual prayer,"* though the preacher may "not repeat in express words the necessity of aid from that good Spirit, without whom we cannot please God."†

Now what would be the natural and reasonable reply of the people to teachers who *avow* such principles as these? Should it not be—"We thank you for the warning. You have disclosed your method of procedure; and that is of such a nature that no reasonable man would chuse to become your disciple. He who professes the allowableness and duty of having one gospel for the mass of the people, and another for the initiated few, and is believed in *that* profession, need not wonder to find that he is thenceforward believed in *nothing else*. For when it is known that a man wears a mask, all persons will form their own conjectures as to what is under it."

As long as a teacher avows that he keeps back an important part of his doctrine from all but a few persons, selected according to his own judgment (or that of the school or party he belongs to) of their fitness—so long there will remain reasonable room for suspecting that those *reserved* doctrines, if known, would greatly modify, or even alter altogether, the nature of his system as taught in the first instance. Nor can such suspicions be easily removed by any assurances, however solemn, on the part of the teacher, that the doctrines which he reserves do not *essentially* alter the system: since, unless we know exactly what the system is, we cannot tell what is (in his opinion) an *essential* alteration of it.

It is sufficiently startling in the outset, for instance, to be told that it makes no essential difference in Gospel faith whether men are explicitly taught the DIVINITY AND ATONEMENT OF CHRIST, or whether they receive them only in unexplained hints and symbols; and that it makes no essential difference in christian conduct whether it be practised upon such motives as these doctrines would supply, or through "natural piety, common honesty, and dread of judgment to come, assisted by prayer and fasting!" One is naturally led to suspect that those who use such language have very different notions of what is essential in the gospel from anything that would reasonably be

* Tract lxxxvii. p. 51.

† Ibid. p. 59.

supposed. Nor can we, even if we ascertained completely the whole of the private sentiments of any *one* teacher upon the subject, be sure that we have gained even a single step in removing the veil which hangs over the real inward teaching of the *school*. There may be not only a double, but a treble, and a quadruple teaching, to an indefinite extent.

Your teacher may be, in his turn, the disciple of another, who has not yet seen fit to *initiate* him into a full knowledge of the mysteries, which he, therefore, can only imperfectly explain to you. He who has kept *you* in the dark, may himself be kept in the dark no less by *his* instructors, as to *their* secret belief; and these, again, may be mystified in the same way by others, and so on, without limit. They may have different stages of initiation, like the freemasons; each Order mystifying those below, and mystified by those above.

Now the suspicions which the very avowal of such a principle as that of "reserve"—the avowal on the part of the Tractite teachers that they felt themselves justified in keeping back important parts of their system as secrets only to be imparted to such as they judged "fit" for them—was fitted to excite,—these suspicions were soon further confirmed and increased by alarming disclosures of the way in which they had reduced that principle to practice. To these we shall draw your attention in the next Caution.

No. XIII.

"We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty; not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."—2 Cor. iv. 2.

A STRANGER, on hearing of men who *avowed* such a system of "double doctrine," as we have been explaining in the last *Caution*, would, at first, wonder at their boldness, and suppose that no man of common sense and honesty would have anything to do with them. "Their *practice*," he would say, "of this method of 'Reserve,' or whatever else they please to call it, proves them to be deficient in moral principle; and their *avowal* of the practice, shows them equally deficient in prudence. *Cunning* deceivers may often be dangerous persons; but cunning deceivers do not publish their own craft, at least to those whom they are seeking to beguile. If these men (he might say) had kept their own counsel, they might have wrought much mischief; but now that they have let out their secret they cannot possibly *do* harm, however they may intend it. For, though many sell adulterated tea, and razors that will not cut, and guns that will burst, and other fraudulent impositions upon unwary customers, they don't *proclaim* such articles; nor, if they did, would any one deal with them."

Yet so it is, that thousands have been, and daily are, imposed upon by the artful practice of this same "double doctrine," though, at the same time, it is plainly avowed by the men who practise it. Thousands are daily trusting themselves implicitly to the teaching of men, who, by their own confession, do not always teach their full *inward* system to their disciples; and who themselves again may be blindly following other teachers, that, in their turn, have certain "reserved" truths also, which, if known, would greatly modify the meaning of their popular lessons. And a disciple of such teachers will sometimes be shocked and offended if any one ventures to drop a hint that

his guides may be gradually drawing him on to admit conclusions which he does not now suspect, and from which he would, just at present, shrink back with aversion. "Oh, no! Some of their friends, indeed, may have dropped some *unguarded* expressions, and made statements, or encouraged practices, that are censurable—at least in the way in which they have been taken up by others. But Mr. A. and Mr. B. and Mr. C., who are the authorities that *I* follow, are *quite safe*. Prejudiced people have retailed stories of their sayings and doings, which were doubtless misunderstood and misrepresented. *I* never heard a syllable from their lips that any fair-minded person could regard as having a Romish tendency. And as for Scepticism and Infidelity, *that* is really too bad! It is little short of blasphemy to make such horrible insinuations against such *holy* men, who always profess the deepest reverence for sacred things, and insist on nothing more earnestly than the absolute necessity of a full and unhesitating faith." As if such things could be any guarantee of sound doctrine in the case of persons who avow their intention of putting a veil, whenever they chuse, over the chief features of their system! An Eastern lady goes about with all the lower part of her face muffled up; and he would be a rash admirer who should immediately conclude that the nose and mouth must be beautiful because he sees a fine dark eye and a well-arched brow over it.

It probably is partly to the very *audacity* with which these men proceed that they owe their success with many persons. Many will think that such bold deceit as is ascribed to them must be the invention of their opponents, or that the charge is grounded upon some misapprehension of their real meaning. And, at any rate, there is a semblance of honesty in a bold avowal of anything—even of deceit. Some outrageous liars have retrieved their character, in the eyes of many, by confessing their former lies; and gained the opportunity of practising *new* impositions upon their dupes by avowing that they had imposed upon them before. They have said, "I have been telling you hitherto a whole string of falsehoods, but now you shall hear the whole truth." And they have found listeners simple enough to believe them.

And, out of a somewhat like simplicity, some are apt to conclude, from the apparent honesty of these men's avowal of a

"double doctrine," that, though it might be a dangerous weapon in the hands of others, it is quite safe when used by persons of such straightforward integrity; and that, as employed by them, it is no more than such a *gradual teaching* as all sensible men acknowledge to be fit.

Hence it is that we are compelled to pursue a little further the odious task of *proving* the charge we have brought against these writers; and showing that both their doctrine and their practice are such as to make it quite unsafe to trust them as teachers.

Be assured, it is most painful to us to be compelled to convict any one, not of mere erroneous opinion, but of dishonest artifice; and this is the more painful, when those who are to be convicted are persons whom many sincere and simple-hearted Christians regard as models of piety and virtue. But when one is quite certain, as in the present case, that gross deception is being practised as to the most important matters, it becomes an absolute duty to expose it, so far as to put the unwary on their guard. If you saw any one selling articles of food, or medicines, which you knew to be adulterated with poisonous drugs, you would be a partaker of his guilt if you did not warn your neighbours against dealing with him. And the present is a similar case.

It may be thought, indeed, that when men avow, themselves, their own double dealing, this is sufficient warning to every one who comes in their way. But certain it is, that the persons we have been speaking of do obtain the confidence of some honest and well-intentioned Christians. And as it is incredible that any man of common sense, and common honesty, should trust any one whom he knew to be a deceiver, it seems evident that, notwithstanding their own avowals, they must, by some means or other, succeed in gaining credit for sincerity.

In what way this is brought about, we shall endeavour to explain in a future Number. In the meantime, we must do our duty in exposing their disingenuousness.

In the first place, then, you will observe that the great models whom these men profess to copy are "The Fathers," as they are called—that is, the chief writers of the prevailing party in the Church for about 1200 years after the Apostles' time. Now, when you remember how anxiously the Apostles warned Chris-

tians of the danger of being "spoiled by philosophy [the false philosophy of the heathens] and vain deceit," and of becoming "conformed to this [heathen] world;" and how they told them that, even from among their own teachers, "should men arise speaking perverse [wrong, distorted] things;" you will not be surprised to hear that the evil which they dreaded and foresaw did soon actually happen. Christians soon began to learn false principles and wrong practices from the Heathens by whom they were surrounded; and to fancy that they could gain true converts to their own religion by *accommodating* it to the tastes and prejudices of "the world." And thus, as all the Pagan religions had "Mysteries," or secret rites, to which none but the initiated were admitted; and almost all the Pagan philosophers had a "double doctrine;" so the Christian teachers soon began to bring Mysteries and the double doctrine into the Church. They treated the Sacraments, for example, as Mysteries, and carefully hid the nature of those rites from all unbaptized (or, as they called them, *uninitiated*) persons; and they concealed such doctrines of our religion as they thought most likely to give offence, from the knowledge of the ignorant and unconverted.

Now, before long, this practice of *concealment* produced very gross insincerity in the behaviour of Christian teachers; for when they were forced to say something about their "reserved" doctrines, and would not tell their true nature, they were tempted to use shifts and tricks to escape the difficulty; and, at last to add falsehood to evasion. You may form some notion of the lengths to which some of "the Fathers" went in this way, from a few passages in their writings, which it will be proper to lay before you, not because we take any pleasure in lowering their character, but to show you from what sort of teachers the Tractites have learned their "double doctrine," and what sort of persons they venerate as guides, and call "saints" in some higher sense than ordinary Christians.

The following passage, for example, was cited with approval from Clement of Alexandria (who lived in the second century [100 years] after Christ) by Mr. Newman, then the chief leader of the Tract party, so early as 1833:—"Being ever persuaded of the omnipresence of God, the learned Christian [*literally* the Gnostic, or Man of Knowledge] is satisfied with the approval of

* *History of the Arians*, p. 81.

God, and of his own conscience. Whatever is in his mind is also upon his tongue; towards *those who are fit recipients*, both in speaking and living, he harmonizes his profession with his opinions. He both thinks and speaks the truth; *except when consideration is necessary*; and then, as a physician for the good of his patients, *he will be false, or utter a falsehood*, as the Sophists say. For instance, the great Apostle circumcised Timothy, while he cried out and wrote down 'Circumcision availeth not,' and yet, lest he should so suddenly tear his Hebrew disciples from the law as to unsettle them, accommodating himself to the Jews, he became a Jew, that he might make his gain of all. . . . Nothing, however, but his neighbour's good will lead him to do this. . . . He gives himself up for the Church, for the friends whom He has begotten in the Faith, for an ensample to those who have the ability to undertake the high office of a teacher—full of love to God and man; and, while he preserves the sincerity of his words, he, at the same time, displays the work of zeal for the Lord."

You perceive what a strange misconstruction this writer puts upon Paul's conduct,—as if there were anything even apparently inconsistent between his declaring that "Circumcision availeth not" to salvation, and his circumcising Timothy! Whereas, on the contrary, it was just because he always held and taught that "*Neither* circumcision availeth anything [to salvation], nor uncircumcision;" that, *therefore*, he circumcised Timothy (who was of Jewish descent) in order to show that he did not (as was falsely said) *forbid* the Jews to practise the customs of their nation.

Others of the Fathers go even much further than Clement in attributing insincerity to the Apostles, not as a culpable thing, but as a piece of commendable dexterity. Jerome, for instance, in his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, represents Paul as practising this "economy" when he *seemed* to rebuke Peter. The Apostles, according to him, perfectly understood one another, and only appeared to fall out for the sake of guarding the Gentiles against thinking that *they* were bound to observe the law of Moses. His words are—"That the pretence [of Peter] as if the Law ought to be observed, which would have been injurious to the Gentiles, might be counterbalanced by the pretence [of Paul] that he was to be blamed; and so both people

[Jews and Gentiles] might be kept safe—those who approved circumcision following Peter, and those who were unwilling to undergo it, preaching up the liberty of Paul.”

And in another part of the same writer's works, we find the following apology for employing falsehood in defence of religion :—

“At the same time, we say that there are different ways in which subjects have to be discussed ; and, among others, one is to write *gymnastically*”—(i. e., practising like wrestlers for victory) ; “another, *dogmatically*. In the former, the disputation is indefinite, and the person replying to an adversary has to propose now one thing, now another ; to argue as it suits his purpose ; to say one thing, while he aims at accomplishing a different thing ; *to make believe it is bread he is showing*, when, as the saying is, *it is really a stone*. In the latter, the object in view must be distinct, and a certain openness of speech is necessary. In the one, you are in quest of a result ; in the other, you are laying down something ; in the former, you have to strive for victory ; in the latter, you have simply to teach. When I have to stand up in combat and to contend for my life, do you, as my instructor preparing me for it, say to me, ‘ Don't inflict a wound by a side-blow, and in a part where it is not expected by your antagonist ; strike with a straightforward thrust : it is a shame for you to bring down your enemy by stratagem, and not by strength ? ’ just as if it were not the chief art of combatants to make a feint in one direction, and to hit in another. Pray read Demosthenes ; read Tully ; and if you are not satisfied with the masters of rhetoric, with whom it is a point of art *to say what looks like truth, rather than what is true*, read Plato, Theophrastus, Xenophon, Aristotle, and the rest, who have sprung from the Socratic fountain like so many streams : what is there in these that is undisguised or simple ? What words that may not be used in different senses ? What sense is taken except for the purpose of victory ? ORIGEN, METHODIUS, EUSEBIUS, APOLLINARIS, write at great length against Celsus and Porphyry. See with what arguments, what deceptive questions, they baffle the preparations of the Devil ; and *because they are sometimes obliged to speak, they say—not what they think—but what is expedient*, in opposing the Pagans. I say nothing of the Latin writers, TERTULLIAN, CYPRIAN, MINUTIUS, VICTORINUS, LACTANTIUS,

HILARY, lest I should seem to have been accusing others, rather than defending myself."

2. Now you will observe that, as we proved in the last Caution, the Tract-writers have *avowed* their approbation of those very principles of "reserve" which these "Fathers" carried out in the manner we have just seen; and (which is more) they take those principles as part of the Tradition of "the Fathers," whom they regard as the "well-instructed doctors" of a better Age, and men qualified to teach with authority what is the sense of the Universal Church.

3. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the *practice* of the Tract-writers has been such as their principles of reserve would naturally lead to, and the example of their great models, "the Fathers," would encourage. And such, indeed, it has been.

Take, for instance, the celebrated *Tract* XC. Throughout the earlier of the *Tracts for the Times*, the whole tenour of the *exoteric* [outward and popular] teaching put forward in them, had been, that the Church of Rome had become fixed in dangerous error at the Council of Trent; that this "atrocious Council" (as one of the Tract-writers styled it) had turned what had been mere theological opinions into dogmas of that Church; and that then "did the Roman communion bind itself in covenant to the cause of Antichrist." But, as time went on, it became manifest that a very different *esoteric* [inward] teaching was operating also upon the initiated; and the rash eagerness of some of these forced Mr. Newman, the great leader of the party, into what he himself admitted to be premature disclosures of the real tendency of his doctrines. There were, it seems, amongst his disciples, some who were inclined to follow out his principles further than he then judged it prudent to go, and who were forcing him and his colleagues "to affirm or deny what *they would fain not consider or pronounce upon.*" And, accordingly, to *prevent*—as he said—*men who held Romish doctrines from straggling towards Rome*, he endeavoured, in this Tract, to prove that one might honestly subscribe the Articles of the Church of England, and, at the same time, hold everything laid down in the Decrees of the Council of Trent—and *that*, though the Articles were expressly drawn up to condemn the authoritative teaching of the Roman Church, and *after* the Council of Trent had held twenty-two out of its whole number of twenty-five ses-

sions! In that famous Tract it was deliberately maintained that the Thirty-nine Articles do not, when rightly interpreted, condemn the doctrine of Transubstantiation, or the Invocation of Saints, or the Adoration of Relics, or Purgatory or Indulgences, as sanctioned by the Council of Trent; and that the true rule for interpreting the Articles is, not to take the words in their plain natural sense, but in such a sense—often “non-natural”—as the person signing them may think to be most in accordance with “Catholic tradition.” You may well imagine that to bring the Articles to bear such a sense as what Mr. Newman thought Catholic tradition required, was a task of no little difficulty. Indeed, he set such an example of hair-splitting and wire-drawing—of shuffling equivocation and dishonest garbling of quotations—as made the English people thoroughly ashamed that any man calling himself an Englishman, a gentleman, and a clergyman, should insult their understandings and consciences with such mean sophistry. And soon after, the Heads of Houses at Oxford passed a solemn resolution that “modes of interpretation such as are suggested in the said Tract, *evading rather than explaining* the sense of the Thirty-nine Articles, and *reconciling subscription to them with the adoption of errors which they were designed to counteract*, defeat the objects, and are inconsistent with the due observance, of the statutes of the University.” Yet, notwithstanding all this, the other chief leaders of the Tract-party came forward, without an exception, deliberately and advisedly to defend that shameful Tract from the condemnation it deserved. But this was only of a piece with their general conduct.

Nothing, for example, gave the early *Tracts for the Times* so much currency, and gained for them so well the confidence of a large portion of the public, as the strong denunciations of Romanism which the writers of them, and especially Mr. Newman, put forward. The Church of Rome was called “a lost Church;” its system was styled “the Papal Apostasy,” it was pronounced “heretical,” and declared to have “bound itself by a perpetual covenant to the cause of Antichrist;” men were exhorted to “flee it as a pestilence;” and it was compared to “a demoniac,” and to the Devil himself: and its doctrines were condemned as “profane,” “impious,” “blasphemous,” “gross,” “monstrous,” and “cruel.” Such strong declarations answered their purpose but too well. After some time, indeed, they ceased

to be repeated very earnestly, by Mr. Newman at least. But they stood upon record as matter of evidence; and whenever any one was startled by the romanizing tendency of the later Tracts, then these denunciations were confidently appealed to, as convincing proof that "to oppose ultra-Protestantism,"—such was the cant of the day,—“is not to favour Popery.” And so they continued upon record, till Mr. Newman had no longer any purpose to serve in letting them be quoted as his sincere sentiments. After long delay, he began to make up his mind for the last step, and for determining openly to *avow* his conversion to Romanism: though, by the confession of his friends, he was, for, at least, *four years* before, “though nominally with us, a member of the Roman Communion;”* during which four years he suffered himself to be looked up and appealed to, as the head of a party who styled themselves the only true sons of the Church of England. As the time for that avowal approached, however, he began to show to those whom he expected to carry with him, something more of his “inward sentiments” than they clearly understood before. And, accordingly, an *anonymous paper*—which he has since published under his own name—was inserted in a *provincial newspaper*, to explain that, in making these strong denunciations, he “*said to himself*” (though not to those who were to be deceived by them,) “I am not speaking my own words; I am but following almost a *consensus* [general agreement] of the Divines of my Church. They have ever used the strongest language against Rome, even the most able and learned of them. *I wish to throw myself into their system. While I say what they say, I am safe.* SUCH VIEWS, TOO, ARE NECESSARY FOR OUR POSITION.”†

This needs no comment. But here let us just remark, with respect to some recent publications, by the same person, that when he solemnly denounces Protestantism as practical infidelity, and declares his firm belief in the melting of the blood of St.

* *English Churchman*, Oct. 16, 1845. The writer adds: “*In saying this we charge him with no dishonesty. His desire was to gain time for himself.*” And lower down: “But though the English church does not require them [the most wavering] positively to renounce every Roman doctrine, *she does expect that so much of it as they hold, they will hold to themselves, and that while they continue with her, they will throw themselves into her system, cordially, faithfully work it out, and, if they will, raise it higher.*”

† See the Appendix to this Number.

Januarius, and the miraculous winking of an image in Italy, he should not be offended if we reply by the question :—" But how can we be sure that you are *sincere* ? May you not be only 'throwing yourself into' the Romish system, as you once threw yourself into the Anglican—thinking yourself 'safe' in speaking, 'not your own words,' but those of your newly-chosen Divines ; and taking 'such views as are necessary for YOUR POSITION' ?" If any one, after this fair warning, is deluded a second time by "strong language," he is deceived with his eyes open.

And all this, you will observe further, is evidence not against Mr. Newman alone, but against his colleagues also. When, for instance, at the commencement of the Tract-movement, a distinguished Divine came forward to suggest the very explanation of this "strong language"* which now turns out to have been the true one, Dr. Pusey publicly denounced him as a slanderer of his brethren, and passed his word for the perfect sincerity of the Anti-Romish tone of the early Tracts ; and (what is more) he declares (what could only be known to the Searcher of hearts) that he who brought the charge *did not himself believe it* ; and even after the publication of *Tract XC.*, he deliberately appealed again to this "strong language," in proof that the author of that Tract was sincere in his opposition to Rome. Nay, even after concealment was no longer possible, and when Mr. Newman had retracted his "strong language" Dr. Pusey never retracted *his*. He uttered not a syllable of regret for his uncharitable censure—not a syllable of apology for having brought forward unsound evidence—not a syllable implying the slightest blame of the man who had practised such a long, cool, calculating course of deceit. On the contrary, when Mr. Newman publicly declared his conversion, Dr. Pusey pronounced it "a judgment" on the Anglican Church for not valuing him sufficiently, and took comfort that he was "not so much gone from us, as transplanted into another part of the vineyard," expressing, at the same time, an earnest hope that the vineyard might soon be completely one—since, as he went on to say, "*it is HERESY existing more or less in us which keeps Rome from acknowledging us.*" And, in the same letter, Dr. Pusey owned that he had, for some time previous, apprehended the probable conversion of his friend to Romanism. Yet, up to

* The pamphlet here alluded to is reprinted in the Appendix to this Number.

the last moment, he had been publicly proclaiming his confidence that the leaders, or well-instructed disciples of the Tract-party, were in no danger of going over to Rome!

4. But still larger evidence against the whole party, as a party, is furnished by a *Narrative of Events connected with the Publication of the Tracts for the Times*, put forth in 1843 by Mr. Palmer, of Worcester College, Oxford. This gentleman, being alarmed at the turn which things were then manifestly taking, came forward, as he tells us, to protest "against the spirit of party." But how ill qualified he was to make such a protest appears but too plainly from his own account. It appears that he was one of a number of persons who first arranged the publication of the *Tracts for the Times* in a kind of Association, the declared object of which was, "to maintain pure and inviolate the doctrines, the Services, and the discipline of the Church; that is (N.B.), to withstand all change which involves the denial and suppression of doctrine, a departure from primitive practice in religious Offices, or innovation upon the apostolical prerogatives, Order, and commission, of bishops, priests, and deacons."

Now, this was pretty well to begin with; for you see what a door *the explanation* opens. The members were pledged to oppose all change, *except* in the direction of what each might judge *Catholic antiquity*. It was something like what we call a "Highgate oath," where the proviso swallows up the engagement. However, with such "a broad and simple basis," the Association went to work; the agitation was begun; and the publication of the *Tracts* commenced. They were the organs of an Association—a *conspiracy*, as the law would style it—of which each member lent his countenance and authority to the acts of the rest, and therefore was responsible for those acts. Yet, by Mr. Palmer's own account, scarce any care was taken to ensure that the sentiments put forth were such as the conspirators* really agreed in approving. "No particular arrangements," says he, "had been made as to the composition or revision of tracts, their title, form, &c., when the publication of the *Tracts* commenced, and was continued by several of our friends, each writer printing whatever appeared to him advisable or useful, without *the formality* (!) of previous consultation with others.

* The very term "conspirators" is applied to them in a pamphlet by Mr. Perceval, one of themselves.

. . . . I received these *Tracts*, which were published during my absence, and aided in their distribution at first, because *their general tendency seemed good*, though I confess that I was rather surprised at the rapidity with which they were published *without any previous revision and consultation*; nor did it seem to me that *any caution* was exercised in avoiding language calculated to give needless offence. Circumstances had induced me to pay some attention to the writings of Romish and Dissenting controversialists; and it seemed clear that the *Tracts* contained *gratuitous admissions*, of which these opponents would almost certainly avail themselves."

By-and-bye difficulties thickened, and the "indiscretions" of the *Tracts* became more and more glaring; and two or three times Mr. Palmer made some private and humble remonstrances in influential quarters, but without effect. Still he continued an active member of the conspiracy; till at last, as things grew from bad to worse, he ceased from taking any active share in the work. Yet even then he entered no public protest: he wished to become a sleeping partner; to withdraw from the trouble of business, without taking his name from the Firm or forfeiting his share in the profits. For, along with the progress of Romanism, he saw, as he tells us, that what he calls "*great ecclesiastical principles*" were making great progress also; and he feared to say a word against the Romish tendency, lest he should mar the triumph of those "*great ecclesiastical principles*." The question seems to have been throughout one of policy: he was ready to wink at, or even encourage, error, if he thought it, on the whole, likely to do less harm than good; and he seems to have worked himself up into the belief that he was really a martyr to the truth, from suffering, by his silence, opinions to be attributed to him which he did not hold; that is, by teaching indirectly through the *Tracts* of Mr. Newman, doctrines different from his real inward sentiments! Nay, not content with mere silent acquiescence, he came forward with most of his friends to shield even *Tract* XC. from censure; not because he thoroughly agreed with it, but because he apprehended that the censure on it "*would be represented as a censure on Church principles in general*." And accordingly he sought to get up a public declaration of sympathy with the accused, and of gratitude for the services rendered to "*Church principles*" in general, by the *Tract-writers*!

At last, when the damage done to his party by the outrageous language of Mr. Ward in the *British Critic* forced him to disavow that writer, the line which he chose to take was, laboriously endeavouring to make out that Mr. Newman and the original Tract party were quite distinct from Mr. Ward and his friends. Yet, Mr. Palmer knew very well all the time, that some of the very articles in the *British Critic*, which he made the ground of his protest, had been *highly praised* by Mr. Newman but a short time before, in the preface to a volume of his sermons; that the substance of the rest had been said by Mr. Froude, Mr. Newman, and Dr. Pusey, long before it appeared in the *British Critic*; and that none of the great leaders of the Tract party (though it was their obvious policy to disown those articles, if they could with decency) had ever expressed the slightest censure of them. Finally, Mr. Palmer's narrative was published in 1843, and in 1845 Mr. Newman openly avowed himself a Romanist, having been, by his friend's confession, a Romanist in heart and intention for *four years previous*.

Here, then, were Mr. Palmer and his party knowingly countenancing, for ten long years, the dissemination of pernicious errors; and throwing, as far as in them lay, the youth of the Universities, and some of the most promising minds throughout England, under the influence of writers who were rapidly and effectually drawing them towards Rome; and all this, lest the interests of their party should be damaged, and any injury done to the cause of what they called "Church principles."

Now, what is this but, as we said before, teaching openly, through the *Tracts*, one set of opinions, while, in private, they taught another? And what limit is there to such insincerity? We have seen to what lengths these men have already gone:—The fundamental doctrines of our Reformers have been explained away by interpreting their words in a non-natural sense, so as to allow members of our Church to hold tenets the most opposite. Now, how can any one be sure that the application of the principle is arbitrarily stopped short at this point? Let any one examine, and compare together, *these non-natural interpretations*, and the language, in reference to Christianity, of the foreign *Transcendentalists*, who profess to believe that Christianity came from God,—in the same sense in which *everything* comes from God;—who teach the Incarnation,—explaining to the

initiated that this means the presence of the Deity, *i. e.*, of the "spiritual principle" which pervades the universe—the God of Pantheism—in *Man, generally*, as well as in *all other* animals; and who profess a belief in man's immortality,—that is, that the *human species* will never become extinct, &c. Let any one, we say, compare together these two systems, (if indeed they are to be reckoned as *two*,) and say whether there is ANY GREATER VIOLENCE DONE TO THE ORDINARY SENSE OF WORDS BY THE ONE THAN BY THE OTHER; whether he, who professes himself a *Churchman* according to the one system, may not, with perfect consistency, profess himself a *Christian* according to the other. Even supposing, therefore, that all the disciples of the school in question do inwardly believe in the truth of Christianity, they cannot give any sufficient assurance that they do so.

And the exhibition of this disingenuousness is likely to endanger the faith both of those who are, and of those who are not, themselves of an honest and open disposition. Both will perceive that there is reason to doubt the sincere belief of men who are not only professed Christians,—not only celebrated as able Divines,—but also venerated as men of pure and holy character, even by some who do not adopt their peculiar views. And this last circumstance—the Jesuitical tone of morality, which makes pious fraud consistent with Christian virtue, excluding disingenuousness from the list of "vices"—cannot but produce a powerful effect. When men see that the sincerity with which a supposed good object is pursued is allowed to excuse insincerity in the means employed,—to excuse not only the disguise of one's own sentiments, but also the deliberate misrepresentation of an opponent's, and to justify the bringing forward of heavy charges against a certain Church, which are afterwards admitted not to have been, at the time, believed to be well founded,—all this cannot but tend to disparage Christianity itself (if the picture of it thus presented be supposed a faithful one) in the eyes of the scrupulously honest and guileless, in proportion to their abhorrence of all double-dealing. And those, again, of a lower tone of morality, who confine the term "vice" to intemperate sensuality and the like, will be encouraged themselves to make professions of what they do not believe, and of which they suspect their eminently virtuous leaders to believe as little.

What the real inward sentiments of these men, or any of them, are, we do not pronounce. But certain it is, that to use words, as they do, in a non-natural sense, and to profess outwardly a great respect for, and even belief in, Christianity, discouraging at the same time all examination of its evidences, and treating it as a matter of sentiment, this is now the prevailing tone of infidelity. And a most disgusting tone it is. Surely, in so important a quarrel as that between infidels and believers, common honesty and common decency require that it should be fought out in daylight; and that the combatants should engage with their vizors up, or with some outward cognizance of the side which they espouse. Hypocrisy has been styled the "homage which vice renders to virtue;" but if virtue herself could be consulted, she would probably think the courteous custom "better honoured in the breach than the observance." And every sincere well-wisher to the cause of true Christianity would prefer a thousand times the open hostility of the old infidels to the malicious flattery of the new. This is, indeed, to betray the Son of Man with a kiss; to approach him with "bated breath and words of lowliness," that his enemies may the more securely seize their victim. Far better to bear all the fierce invective, the subtle cavilling, the wit and sarcasm of the unbelievers of the past generation, than to have our religion thus mocked with the purple robe, and hailed as sovereign, when led away to crucifixion.

In the next *Caution* we hope to notice and refute the various excuses which are commonly put forward for the principle and practice of "the Double Doctrine."

APPENDIX TO CAUTION XIII.

From *Notices of Oxford from Oxford*, reprinted in 1844.

OXFORD AND ROME.

THE following Letter has been forwarded to us for publication. It is without any signature; but we dare say some of our

Oxford readers will find no difficulty in fixing upon the name of the writer.* For ourselves, we give it without note or comment.—*The Conservative Journal*.

TO THE EDITOR.

It is true that I have at various times, in writing against the Roman system, used, not merely arguments, about which I am not here speaking, but what reads like declamation.

1. For instance, in 1833, in the *Lyra Apostolica*, I called it a "lost Church."

2. Also, in 1833, I spoke of "the Papal Apostasy" in a work upon the Arians.†

3. In the same year, in No. 15 of the series called *The Tracts for the Times*, in which *Tract* the words are often mine, though I cannot claim it as a whole, I say—

"True, Rome is heretical now—nay, grant she has thereby forfeited her Orders; yet, at least she was not heretical in the primitive ages. If she has apostatized, it was at the time of the Council of Trent. Then, indeed, it is to be feared the whole Roman Communion bound itself, by a perpetual bond and covenant, to the cause of Antichrist."

Of this and other *Tracts*, a friend with whom I was on very familiar terms, observed, in a Letter some time afterwards, though not of this particular part of it:—

"It is very encouraging about the *Tracts*—but I wish I could prevail on you, when the second edition comes out, to cancel or materially alter several. The other day accidentally put in my way the *Tract on the Apostolical Succession in the English Church*, and it really does seem so very unfair, that I wonder you could, even in the extremity of οἰκονομία and φενακισμὸς, have consented to be a party to it."

On the passage above quoted, I observe myself, in a pamphlet published in 1838:—

"I confess I wish this passage were not cast in so declamatory a form; but the substance of it expresses just what I mean."

4. Also, in 1833, I said:—

* The Rev. J. H. Newman, whose friends are showing it about in Oxford as the production of his pen.

† *Arians of the Fourth Century*, by the Rev. J. H. Newman.

"Their communion is infected with heresy; we are bound to flee it as a pestilence. They have established a lie in the place of God's truth, and by their claim of immutability in doctrine, cannot undo the sin they have committed."—*Tract XX.*

5. In 1834, I said, in a magazine:—

"The spirit of old Rome has risen again in its former place, and has evidenced its identity by its works. It has possessed the Church there planted, as an evil spirit might seize the demons of primitive times, and makes her speak words which are not her own. In the corrupt papal system we have the very cruelty, the craft, and the ambition of the Republic; its cruelty in its unsparing sacrifice of the happiness and virtue of individuals to a phantom of public expediency, in its forced celibacy within, and its persecutions without; its craft in its falsehoods, its deceitful deeds and lying wonders; and its grasping ambition in the very structure of its policy, in its assumption of universal dominion; old Rome is still alive; nowhere have its eagles lighted, but it still claims the sovereignty under another pretence. The Roman Church I will not blame, but pity—she is, as I have said, spell-bound, as if by an evil spirit; she is in thralldom."

I say in the same paper:—

"In the book of Revelations, the sorceress upon the seven hills is not the Church of Rome, as is often taken for granted, but Rome itself, that bad spirit which, in its former shape, was the animating principle of the fourth monarchy. In St. Paul's prophecy, it is not the Temple or Church of God, but the man of sin in the Temple, the old man or evil principle of the flesh, which exalteth itself against God. Certainly it is a mystery of iniquity, and one which may well excite our dismay and horror, that in the very heart of the Church, in her highest dignity, in the seat of St. Peter, the evil principle has throned itself, and rules. It seems as if that spirit had gained subtlety by years; Popish Rome has succeeded to Rome Pagan: and would that we had no reason to expect still more crafty developments of Antichrist amid the wreck of institutions and establishments, which will attend the fall of the papacy! . . . I deny that the distinction is unmeaning. Is it nothing to be able to look on our mother, to whom we owe the blessings of Christianity, with affection instead of hatred, with pity indeed, nay and fear, but not

with horror? Is it nothing to rescue her from the hard names which interpreters of prophecy have put on her, as an idolatress and an enemy of God, when she is deceived rather than a deceiver?"

I also say:—

"She virtually substitutes an external ritual for moral obedience; penance for penitence, confession for sorrow, profession for faith, the lips for the heart; such, at least, is her system as understood by the many."

Also I say in the same paper:—

"Rome has robbed us of high principles which she has retained herself, though in a corrupt state. When we left her, she suffered us not to go in the beauty of holiness, we left our garments and fled."

Against these and other passages of this paper the same friend, before it was published, made the following protest:—

"I only except from this general approbation, your second and most superfluous hit at the poor Romanists; you have first set them down as demoniacally possessed by the evil genius of Pagan Rome, but, notwithstanding, are able to find something to admire in their spirit, particularly because they apply ornament to its proper purposes: and then you talk of their churches; and all that is very well, and one hopes one has heard the end of name-calling, when all at once you relapse into your Protestantism, and deal in what I take leave to call slang."

Then, after a remark which is not to the purpose of these extracts, he adds:—

"I do not believe that any Roman-catholic of education would tell you that he identified penitence and penance. In fact I know, that they often preach against this very error as well as you could do."

6. In 1834, I also used of certain doctrines of the Church of Rome, the epithets "unscriptural," "profane," "impious," "bold," "unwarranted," "blasphemous," "gross," "monstrous," "cruel," "administering deceitful comfort," and "unauthorized," in *Tract 38*. I do not mean to say that I had not a definite meaning in every one of these epithets, or that I did not weigh them before I used them.

With reference to this passage the same monitor had said :—

“I must enter another protest against your cursing and swearing at the end of the first *Via Media* as you do (*Tract 38*). What good can it do? I call it uncharitable to an excess. How mistaken we may ourselves be on many points that are only gradually opening on us!”

I withdrew the whole passage several years ago.

7. I said in 1837 of the Church of Rome :—

“In truth she is a Church beside herself, abounding in noble gifts and rightful titles, but unable to use them religiously; crafty, obstinate, wilful, malicious, cruel, unnatural, as madmen are. Or, rather, she may be said to resemble a demoniac, possessed with principles, thoughts, and tendencies not her own; in outward form and in outward powers what God made her; but ruled within by an inexorable spirit, who is sovereign in his management over her, and most subtle and most successful in the use of her gifts. Thus, she is her real self only in name, and till God vouchsafe to restore her, we must treat her as if she were that evil one which governs her.”

8. In 1837, I also said in a Review :—

“The second and third Gregories appealed to the people against the Emperor for a most unjustifiable object, and in apparently a most unjustifiable way. They became rebels, to establish image worship. However, even in this transaction, we trace the original principle of Church-power, though miserably defaced and perverted, whose form

‘ Had yet not lost
All her original brightness, nor appeared
Less than Archangel ruined, and the excess
Of glory obscured.’

Upon the same basis, as is notorious, was built the Ecclesiastical Monarchy. It was not the breath of princes, or the smiles of a court, which fostered the stern and lofty spirit of Hildebrand and Innocent. It was the neglect of self, the renunciation of worldly pomp and ease, the appeal to the people.”

I must observe, however, upon this passage, that no reference is made in it (the idea is shocking) to the subject of Milton’s lines, who ill answers to the idea of purity and virtue defaced, of which they speak. An application is made of them to a subject

which I considered, when I so wrote, to befit them better, viz. the Roman Church as viewed in a certain exercise of her power in the person of two Popes.

Perhaps I have made other statements in a similar tone, and that, again, when the statements themselves were unexceptionable and true. If you ask me how an individual could venture, not simply to hold, but to publish such views of a community so ancient, so wide-spreading, so fruitful in saints, I answer, that I said to myself, "I am not speaking my own words, I am but following almost a *consensus* of the Divines of my Church. They have ever used the strongest language against Rome, even the most able and learned of them. I wish to THROW MYSELF INTO THEIR SYSTEM. *While I say what they say, I am safe.* Such views, too, are NECESSARY FOR OUR POSITION." Yet I have reason to fear still, that such language is to be ascribed, in no small measure, to an impetuous temper, a hope of approving myself to persons' respect, and a wish to repel the charge of Romanism.

An admission of this kind involves no retraction of what I have written in defence of Anglican doctrine. And as I make it for personal reasons, I make it without consulting others. I am as fully convinced as ever, indeed I doubt not Roman-catholics themselves would confess, that the Anglican doctrine is the strongest, nay, the only possible antagonist of their system. If Rome is to be withstood, it can be done in no other way.

Dec. 12, 1842.

TO THE REV. J. H. NEWMAN.

REV. SIR,—As it is the policy of your party to pass over without notice the arguments of your opponents, and "treat them as if they had never been urged," I cannot wonder that you should not have replied to an appeal which I made to you a few weeks ago in reference to your letter to the *Conservative Journal*; nor should I again trouble you upon the subject of that letter, were it not for a paragraph in it, involving principles, in the judgment of many dangerous to the morality of the University.

The paragraph I allude to is the following, in which you excuse yourself for the strong language which you had suffered yourself to use against the Church of Rome:

"If you ask me how an individual could venture, not simply to hold, but to publish such views of a communion so ancient, so wide-spreading, so fruitful in saints, I answer, that I said to myself, 'I am not speaking my own words, I am but following almost a *consensus* of the divines of my Church. They have ever used the strongest language against Rome, even the most able and learned of them. I wish to throw myself into their system. While I say what they say, I am safe. Such views, too, are necessary for our position.'"

Now, here, Sir, you avow, that at the very time you were passing the severest censures upon Rome, pronouncing her "wilful, malicious, cruel," and the like, you were *doubting*, to say the least, whether such language was justifiable. You were "not using your own words," *i. e.*, words of the propriety of which you were satisfied in your own judgment, and your mind misgave you as to whether they were really applicable to a Church "so ancient, so wide-spreading, so fruitful in saints." But you set your conscience at rest by the consideration, first, that others whom you looked up to had used the same before; and again, that it was "necessary for your position," (your "position," I presume, as the leader of a party, whose object it is to "un-protestantize the Anglican Church,") that you should mask your designs by the "strongest language against the Church of Rome."

On re-considering the principles involved in these excuses, it occurred to me that I had before met with them in an account of the casuistry of the Jesuits, at l. viii. chap. 11, of Ranke's *History of the Papacy*, and on referring to the volume I found the following direction extracted from the Aphorisms of Emmanuel Sa, which precisely meets your case:—

"In a doubtful matter it is lawful to do what one imagines to be right upon the ground of a probable reason or authority, *even if the opposite be the safer course*; it is sufficient if one has on one's side the opinion of a writer of weight, or the example of good men."*

Here we have precisely your own position. You *doubted* whether your language towards Rome was justifiable; you were

* *Protest quis facere quod probabili ratione vel auctoritate putat licere, etiamsi oppositum tutius sit: sufficit autem opinio alicujus gravis doctoris, aut bonorum exemplum.*—Emm. Sa *Aphorismi Confessoriorum* in verbo "*Dubium*."

not called upon to use it; silence was the *safer course*. But you had on your side the practice of writers whom you looked up to (graves doctores, exemplum bonorum), and—your scruples gave way.

Now, Sir, I do not mean to deny that the coincidence of your opinion upon such a point of morality with that of a Jesuit casuist, may have been fortuitous; I think most likely it was. But I am induced to address you by the following consideration. The Bishop of Oxford said* long ago, (though, probably, if he has seen your letter, his Lordship would not say so now,) that he had “more fear of the disciples than the teachers:” and you have yourself remarked,† that there are in this place “a number of persons of practised intellects, who, with or without unfriendly motives, are ever drawing out the ultimate conclusions in which your principles result.” Well, let us anticipate the following, alas! I fear no imaginary, case. A young man, an admirer of the 90th Tract, meditates taking Orders, but scruples at subscription to the Articles, and the Oath of Supremacy. He doubts whether he can conscientiously declare that no foreign prelate *ought to have* any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence, or authority, *Ecclesiastical or Spiritual*, within this realm.” He knows that there is not a Bishop of our Church who approves of the interpretation of the Articles advocated in the 90th Tract, and accordingly begins to feel something of the “misery,” which you have yourself‡ alluded to, of looking forward to subscription “with *doubt* and hesitation.” But then he calls to mind your principles, and those of Emmanuel Sa. To be sure, the *safer* course is not to take Orders at all; but *you* have subscribed the Articles, and taken the Oath of Supremacy, and so has Dr. Pusey, and *you* keep your living and Dr. Pusey his Canonry, let the Bishops say what they will; and he is told in the *British Critic* that “almost a consensus” of the leading divines of our Church agree with you. Besides, it is “necessary for his position.” If he wishes for a Fellowship or Living, he must do as you have done. And accordingly, with faltering voice, and trembling hand, he takes the Oath, and subscribes the Articles, and so PERISHES THY WEAK BROTHER, FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED.

* Charge, 1838.

† Letter to the Bishop of Oxford, p. 17.

‡ Letter to Dr. Jelf, p. 28.

"IT IS IMPOSSIBLE BUT THAT OFFENCES WILL COME, BUT WOE UNTO HIM THROUGH WHOM THEY COME. IT WERE BETTER FOR HIM THAT A MILL-STONE WERE HANGED ABOUT HIS NECK, AND HE CAST INTO THE SEA, THAN THAT HE SHOULD OFFEND ONE OF THESE LITTLE ONES."*

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient humble servant,

A MEMBER OF CONVOCATION.

March 24, 1843.

TO THE REV. J. H. NEWMAN.

REV. SIR,—In the *Oxford Herald* of Saturday last there appears a Letter which, claiming you for its author,† although without any name attached to it, has naturally created a great sensation in the University, by its retraction of several of the passages in your published writings, in which you were considered to have "pledged yourself the most strongly" (to borrow your own expression‡) "against the Church of Rome." Allow me to point out to you one or two difficulties which have occurred to me in the perusal of your letter, which have probably suggested themselves to other persons as well.

You refer to a series of passages penned by you, between the years 1833 and 1838, in which you denounce the Church of Rome as "a communion infected with heresy, crafty, obstinate, cruel, malicious, and as having bound itself, you feared, at the Council of Trent, by a perpetual bond and covenant to the cause of Antichrist;" and you further cite, with an apparent acknowledgment of their justice, the observations of a friend, in which he blames you for this language, and remarks upon some of your expressions that they were "so very unfair," that he wondered you could "even in the extremity of οἰκονομία and φεικισμὸς"§ have permitted yourself to use them.

* Luke xvii. 2, 3.

† i. e. in the following passage:—"Also in 1833 I spoke of 'the Papal Apostacy' in a work upon the Arians," the title of the work being, *The Arians of the Fourth Century*, by the Rev. J. H. Newman.

‡ *Letter to Dr. Jelf*, p. 30.

§ φεικισμὸς in Donnegan's Lexicon is rendered "imposture; deception by a false appearance; delusion; deception." Of the οἰκονομία you have yourself given the following account in your work upon the Arians:—

"The Alexandrian Father who has already been referred to (Clement) accurately describes the rules which should guide the Christian in speaking and acting economically.

At the close of your Letter you say, "If you ask me how an individual could venture, not simply to hold, but to publish such views of a communion so ancient, so wide-spreading, so fruitful in saints, I answer that I said to myself, 'I am not speaking my own words, I am but following almost a *consensus* of the divines of my Church. They have ever used the strongest language against Rome, even the most able and learned of them. I wish to throw myself into their system. While I say what they say, I am safe.'" You add, "Such views too are necessary for our position."

Now, Sir, in your letter, which is dated Dec. 12, 1842, you make no reference (*why*, I shall not stop to inquire) to your Letter to Dr. Jelf, dated March 13, 1841, in which, and therefore not quite two years ago, you used the following language, which I am wholly unable to account for by the foregoing explanation:—

"As to the present authoritative teaching of the Church of Rome, *to judge by what we see of it in public*, I think it *goes very far indeed to substitute another Gospel for the true one*: instead of setting before the soul the Holy Trinity, and Heaven, and Hell, it does seem to me as a popular system, to preach the Blessed Virgin, and the Saints, and Purgatory. Or, to use words in which I have only a year ago expressed myself, when contrasting Romanism with the teaching of the ancient Church, 'That a certain change in objective and external religion has come over the Latin, nay, and in a measure the Greek Church, **WE CONSIDER TO BE A PLAIN HISTORICAL FACT**; a change sufficiently startling' to recall to our minds with very unpleasant sensations the awful words, 'Though we, or an angel from Heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that you have received, let him be accursed.'"

Now, Sir, when you here say that the corruption of the Romish system is a "**PLAIN HISTORICAL FACT**," and "**YOU JUDGE BY WHAT YOU SEE OF IT IN PUBLIC**," that it "*goes far to substitute another Gospel for the true one*," do you really mean that these

'Being ever persuaded of the omnipresence of God,' he says, 'and ashamed to come short of the truth, he is satisfied with the approval of God, and of his own conscience. Whatever is in his mind, is also on his tongue; towards those who are fit recipients, both in speaking and living, he harmonizes his profession with his opinions. He both thinks and speaks the truth; except when consideration is necessary, and then, as a physician for the good of his patients, he will be false, or utter a falsehood, as the Sophists say.'—p. 81.

are not your own words, and that you are "merely following almost a consensus of the divines of your Church?" Is this *οἰκονομία* or *φενакισμὸς*, to speak Greek, or in plain English, is it common honesty?

But you inform us that you satisfied your conscience with another reflection, viz. that "such views were necessary for your position." I am at a loss to understand you here. Is your excuse that of Bishop Montague, when the Pope's agent* reproached him with *his* censures of the Church of Rome, "Oh, they are things of form, chiefly to humour the populace, and are not to be too much regarded"? And if you do not mean this, allow me to ask what you do mean?

At all events, you now abandon the language which you had been in the habit of using for not less than eight years, and acknowledge that in using it you were in "no small measure influenced by an impetuous temper, a hope of approving yourself to persons' respect, and a wish to repel the charge of Romanism." It is thus that you have shifted from point to point, through every stage of your erratic course. First, those who agreed with you were Anglo-catholic, now they are Catholic; those who differed from you were ultra-Protestant, now Protestant; first the Council of Trent was "atrocious," then only "unhappy," at last quite orthodox. And now you have fulfilled Dr. Wiseman's prediction, addressed to you upon the repetition in your letter to Dr. Jelf of the language which you now disclaim. "Why not suspect your own judgments, if you find that they vary? If there ever *was* a time when you did not see many of our doctrines as you now view them, when you utterly rejected all comprecation with, as well as prayers to, Saints; all honour without reserve to images and relics; when you did not practise prayers for the departed, nor turned from the congregation in your services; when you did not consider bodily mortification necessary, or the Breviary so beautiful; when, in fine, you were more remote from us in practice and feeling than your writings now show you to be; *why not suspect that a further approximation may yet remain*; that further discoveries of truth in what to-day seems erroneous, may be reserved for to-morrow, and that you may be LAYING UP FOR YOURSELF THE PAIN AND REGRET,

* Panzani. See his *Memoirs* by Berington.

OF HAVING BEFOREHAND BRANDED WITH OPPROBRIOUS AND AFFLICTING NAMES THAT WHICH YOU NOW DISCOVER TO BE GOOD AND HOLY?"

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient, humble servant,
A MEMBER OF CONVOCATION.

Feb. 21, 1843.

TO THE REV. E. B. PUSEY,
Regius Professor of Hebrew.

REV. SIR,—“A Member of Convocation,” in a public letter, dated February the 21st, which has hitherto been “treated as though it had never been written,” has very distinctly indicated the character of Mr. Newman’s recent retraction of certain “statements” and “views,” by which he some years since wished persons to understand him as “pledging himself strongly” against Rome.* Allow me to suggest that your own position is materially affected by the terms of this retraction.

You will recollect the publication, in 1836, by an eminent Divine, now no more, of a satire, entitled *The Pope’s Pastoral Letter to certain Members of the University of Oxford*,† which, among other passages, contained the following, addressed to your party, and which I transcribe as extracted by yourself:‡—

“We make allowance for those difficulties which impede your perception or *your avowal* of the truth. (p. 6.) We pardon some expressions towards us; compelled, no doubt, partly by the unhappy circumstances of your country. You have indeed sometimes employed terms which we well know our adversaries use in derision of us; but, we repeat, we can pardon these, whether they are the result of prejudices still entertained by you, or *are employed for some other reason*. (pp. 6, 7.) That communion, of which the present circumstances of your country have made you, *almost unavoidably*, members. (p. 11.) While we perceive with delight that you have always spoken, in your own persons, in accordance with our sentiments on this head, you have, at the same time, selected some tracts from early

* Newman’s *Letter to Jelf*, p. 30.

† Reprinted at the end of this Appendix.

‡ Pusey’s *Earnest Remonstrance*, page 32.

writers of your communion, in which our sentiments are impugned. These old tracts will not be read with much attention; compared at least with your own more lively productions: they can, too, be readily withdrawn when it is expedient; for they are not a pledge of your opinions as strong as your own writings. In the meantime, you may appeal to your re-publication of them as a proof that you have not leagued yourselves with us."

To these insinuations you thought fit to rejoin, in *An Earnest Remonstrance to the Author* of the satire; in which, after indignantly charging the writer with "sacrifice of truth," "false insinuation, and, consequently, slandering," "want of honesty," and "evil desertion of the truth," and indulging in many just expressions on the beauty of truth, sincerity, and simplicity, you thus conclude:—

"Now of all this, Sir, you do not believe one syllable; you do not think that, either in the republication of the older, or the protests of the more modern tracts against Popery, their editors or authors were actuated by any such motives; while you impute insincerity, you have reason to believe them as sincere as yourself. It is an ill tree which brings forth fruit thus corrupt."

I am by no means inclined (unless your silence should force on me a conviction to the contrary) to dispute that this *Remonstrance* was, at the time, as sincere as it was energetic. But, now that we have in Mr. Newman a "*confitentem reum*," now that he has (whether spontaneously, or in deference to some eager follower) admitted that there *were* "difficulties impeding his avowal of the truth,"* such, perhaps, as "the unhappy circumstances of our country;" that the terms he employed *were* "*employed for some other reason* than on account of prejudices still entertained by him;"† now that he *has*, in effect, "withdrawn the tracts selected from early writers of our communion, in which the sentiments of the Bishop of Rome are impugned;" and *has* availed himself of the distinction that they were "not a pledge of his opinions as strong as his own writings,"‡ *although* he, "in the meantime, appealed to his republication" of

* "Such views, too, are necessary to our position."—Newman's *Letter to the Editor of the Conservative Journal*.

† "Such language is, I fear, to be, in no small measure, ascribed to an impetuous temper, and a hope of approving myself to persons' respect."—*Ibid*.

‡ "I said to myself, I am not speaking my own words, I am but following a consensus of the divines of my Church."—*Ibid*.

such views as a proof that he had not "leagued himself" with Rome;* permit me, Rev. Sir, with all deference, to adopt this means of conveying to you an opinion, extensively shared by others, that your colleague has left you no alternative but that of "earnestly remonstrating" against *confessions*, which I cannot characterize in stronger language than you did, when they were advanced, in the form of *charges*, by an opponent, unless you would dispute his claim to be considered the most accomplished adept in the revived arts of "economy" and "phenacism."

I remain, Rev. Sir, yours, &c.,

ANOTHER MEMBER OF CONVOCATION.

Oxford, March 15, 1843.

"The Pope's Pastoral" which has been referred to in this Appendix, it has been thought advisable here to reprint entire:

It originally appeared anonymously; as the character of the work evidently required; but has since been republished along with some other short, but most valuable, productions of the same pen, in the "Remains of Bishop Dickinson," edited by Archdeacon West. [Fellowes, Ludgate-street.]

It had a wide circulation in the years 1836—7; and doubtless had the effect of putting many on their guard against the Romanist-tendency of the earlier *Tracts for the Times*. But many were blind to this, even when pointed out to them. Some of these afterwards learned it from their experience of what subsequently took place. But there are some, even now, who, with this work before them, which has now the character of a FULFILLED PROPHECY, express *surprise* as well as disgust at the tone of the later Tracts, and at the secessions to Rome that have occurred, and who still profess adherence to the principles of the *earlier* Tracts,—the only ones published when the "Pastoral" first appeared, and of which the Romish tendency is there so clearly shown. Neither Reason nor Experience has convinced them of the connexion of these principles with their legitimate consequences.

* Newman's *Letter to Jelf*, page 30: "I pledged myself most strongly against the Church of Rome." Also, vide *Appendix to Pusey's Letter to the Bishop of Oxford*, containing "Extracts from the Tracts for the Times, the *Lyra Apostolica*, and other publications," showing that to oppose ultra-Protestantism is not to favour Popery. 1839."—Newman's *Letter to the Editor of the Conservative Journal*.

PASTORAL EPISTLE FROM HIS HOLINESS THE
POPE TO SOME MEMBERS OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF OXFORD.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Translator of the following Epistle feels that no apology is required for laying before the Public so interesting a document. Nor will he occupy the reader with a detail of the series of circumstances by which the original came into his hands. The genuineness of the Epistle he is content to refer to the internal evidence of the Epistle itself. The names of the individuals to whom it was addressed he has not deemed it necessary to make public, any further than by reference to their published Tracts, from which so many quotations have been made in the Pastoral. The utmost care has been bestowed on the fidelity of the translation; and the quotations have all been diligently verified by inspection of the original Tracts.

It is hoped that the Authors of these Tracts will feel no displeasure at a publication which tends to give to their sentiments a more extended circulation.

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE FOURTH EDITION.

THE Rev. Dr. Pusey, Canon of Christ Church, has published a pamphlet, in which he takes it for granted that the following letter is not authentic. But as he has not ventured to give the grounds of his conviction, the Editor cannot, of course, even attempt to refute them. As for the accordance or non-accordance of the Tracts referred to with the principles of the Church of Rome, every reader must judge for himself by the internal evidence which those tracts afford. Whether Dr. Pusey is himself one of the class of persons to whom the Pope has addressed himself, it is not for the Editor to decide. Dr. Pusey has, indeed, in the pamphlet alluded to, supported his own views by an appeal both to the Fathers, and also to about twenty Bishops of the Established Church. The reader will judge for himself whether the Church of Rome will be disposed to pardon this reference to bishops not within her pale, in consideration of the

countenance thus afforded to an important principle—the principle of appealing for the decision of religious questions to what Protestants are in the habit of calling human authority.

PASTORAL EPISTLE.

BELOVED FRIENDS,—We do not conceive it necessary to occupy your time by any declaration, on our part, of the anxiety with which we contemplate every matter which concerns the advancement and support of true religion. To the uncandid indeed, who have been long opposed to us, it would be useless to present such a statement; we could not expect to be believed by those who have shown no respect for the authority and commands of the very Apostles, whose representatives we are.

Living at a distance from you, however, it may seem to you a matter of astonishment that we should be enabled to form a very different estimate of the character of your minds. But we have never been inattentive to the welfare even of those States which have trampled inconsiderately upon our apostolic authority. We have watched with close attention whatever could hold out to a distracted world the prospects of a religious unity; and, as a tender father, we can discern even at a distance, and shall be ever found ready to welcome the returning steps of our repentant children. We have accordingly taken care that our faithful brethren in every country should transmit to us, from time to time, such writings as appeared to be worthy of our regard. It was with the liveliest pleasure, therefore, that we received lately a collection of Tracts, emanating from our ancient and well-beloved University of Oxford. We do not, of course, mean to imply that every opinion in these tracts is such as the Church can wholly approve,—but we do discern that light is beginning to pervade your minds, and that, as far as circumstances permit, you have not hesitated to declare your convictions. We make allowance for those difficulties which impede your perception or your avowal of the truth; we pardon, therefore, some expressions towards us,—compelled, no doubt, partly by the unhappy circumstances of your country; but we can discern the progress you have made in the paths of truth and

peace, and we trust that you will continue to advance in those paths, till the light which has dawned on you shall have burst forth into perfect day.

That you may not only be encouraged in your progress, but assisted by us with such help as we can bestow, we shall point out to you some portions of your writings which have created lively pleasure in our parental feelings. You have indeed sometimes employed terms which we well know our adversaries use in derision of us; but, we repeat, we can pardon these, whether they are the result of prejudices still entertained by you, or are employed for some other reason; for while we perceive you speak with deserved acrimony of all the sects which swarm in your distracted country, you honestly state that you are "unwilling to speak harshly of us."*

But how could our hearts be steeled against the real tenderness of the affections which you breathe towards us?

"Now the Papists have retained it," (namely, a visible Church—the keeper of the Sacraments,) "and so they have the advantage of possessing an instrument which is, in the first place, suited to the needs of human nature; and next, is a special gift of Christ, and so has a blessing with it. Accordingly we see that in its measure success follows their zealous use of it. They act with great force upon the imaginations of men. The vaunted antiquity, the universality, the unanimity of their church, puts them above the varying fashions of the world, and the religious novelties of the day. And truly, when one surveys the grandeur of their system, a sigh arises in the thoughtful mind, to think that we should be separate from them; *Cum talis sis, utinam noster esses!*"† That sigh, beloved friends, has found an echo in our bosom. Never, from the first moment of separation, has it been unfelt by the Catholic Church. But, in truth, we are not separate. We are united in spirit though not in name. Yes, we are yours and you are ours. You are looking towards our Zion, with your face thitherwards; and we long to open our arms and to receive you into the peaceful haven, where ye would be.

You, brethren, assuredly are not blamable for the painful divisions which seemed to have removed England from our im-

* Tracts for the Times, Vol. II. (Records of the Church, No. XXV. p. 6.)

† Tracts for the Times, No. XX. p. 3.

mediate care. We see, indeed, how little you sympathize with those wretched men, who, to their own destruction, caused the separation which you deplore. For what was the principle upon which they pressed their pretended reformation? They deceived their brethren by loud declamations concerning the necessity of improvement. Some weak brethren would have had the Church yield to their importunity, and consent to some alterations for the sake of pacifying excitement. But the Church formed a different estimate of duty, and it gives us the sincerest pleasure to discern that you maintain the propriety of its decision. You have justly remarked, according to the wisdom of the one true Church,—“Once begin altering, and there will be no reason or justice in stopping, till the criticisms of all parties are satisfied. Thus, will not the Liturgy be in the evil case described in the well-known story of the picture subjected by the artist to the observations of passers-by?”*

And again, you truly observe: “A taste for criticism grows upon the mind. When we begin to examine and take to pieces, our judgment becomes perplexed, and our feelings unsettled. I do not know,” you add, “whether others feel this to the same extent, but for myself, I confess there are few parts of the service that I could not disturb myself about, and feel fastidious at, if I allowed my mind in this *abuse of reason*.”† Would that a wisdom similar to yours had been possessed by those wretched and ambitious men who plagued Christendom, and excited the minds of so many into a desire of vain innovation! The Church was fully sensible of the impropriety of indulging such vain desires. It asked itself, as you have now asked, “What are the concessions which would conciliate such men? Would immaterial alterations? Do you really think they care one jot about the verbal or other changes which some recommend, and others are disposed to grant? But even were the alterations, which would please them, small, are they the persons whom it is of use—whom it is becoming—to conciliate by going out of our way?”‡ Such was the judgment of the one true Church. We felt like you, that it is not becoming to conciliate, that it is useless to make the attempt, and is full of peril. “For,” as you remark, “by altering immaterials, we merely

* Tract No. III. pp. 1, 2.

† Ibid. pp. 1, 2.

‡ Ibid. pp. 3, 4.

raise without gratifying the desire of correcting; we excite the craving, but withhold the food. And the changes called immaterial often contain in themselves the germ of some principle of which they are thus the introduction."* Upon these principles we resisted every concession, and you look back with admiration upon our wisdom. We would not allow ourselves to be enticed into argument; we opposed every change because it was change; and when we were apparently urged into an opposite course by our Erasmus, who seemed at one time like a faithless brother, we resisted his importunity, because we formed of him the opinion which you have expressed concerning your own bishops, when you say, in an address to your brethren, "Should you see that our fathers the bishops seem to countenance alterations, petition still. Petition them; they will thank you for such a proceeding. *They do not wish these alterations.*"† We formed the same estimate of the insincerity and weakness of our Erasmus; but by not yielding to his infirmities, we rescued him from himself and the band of innovators.

"This unsettling of the mind," as you assert, "is a frightful thing, both to ourselves, and more so to our flocks. They have long regarded the Prayer-Book with reverence, as the stay of their faith and devotion. The weaker sort it will make sceptical, the better it will offend and pain."‡ Yes, beloved friends, such were the fruits produced; and such must always be the result when vain men conceive themselves to be wise above the Church, and presume to judge for themselves of the rituals and observances which the Church has provided for them, "as the stay of their faith and devotion."

There are two circumstances, brethren, which lead us to discern how highly we should appreciate your wisdom and firmness in discountenancing every innovation. In the first place, your conduct in this respect evinces a sobriety superior to what you could have imbibed from that communion, of which the present circumstances of your country have made you, almost unavoidably, members. We have read in one of the documents of that communion a statement which has always excited our surprise.—"It hath been the wisdom of the Church of England ever since the first compiling of her public Liturgy, to keep the mean be-

* Tract, No. III.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

tween the two extremes, of too much stiffness in refusing, and of too much easiness in admitting any variation from it."* Assuredly this was not advisedly written. This imaginary mean can never be discovered. Again, the same document asserts, that "it is but reasonable that, upon weighty and important considerations, according to the various exigency of times and occasions, such changes and alterations should be made therein, as to those that are in place of authority should, from time to time, seem either necessary or expedient." You deserve the more credit for not giving in to this; because you manifestly had this very document and the practice of your communion in view, when you introduced an opponent of your better principles, as observing, "that changes have formerly been made in the services without leading to the issue predicted, and now, therefore, they may be safely made again." Your reply, however, is triumphant, that—"waiving all other remarks in answer to this argument, is not this enough, viz., that there *is* peril?"† Assuredly there is; and you were right on this occasion to waive the other arguments which we perceive were in your mind, namely, that the changes referred to were decidedly for the worse; for they removed the services still more from the ancient and Catholic ritual.

Your dissatisfaction indeed with this result, and consequently with the present condition of your services, is the *second* circumstance to which we alluded, when we said that we could not adequately appreciate your wisdom in resisting the principle of innovation. You perceive how little selfish we are, when we admit that changes should not be risked, even for the purpose of producing a greater conformity to ourselves. You cannot be certain that those in authority would consent to those alterations which you would regard as improvements; and you must not be hasty in urging them too far. Your intimations, however, are deeply important, and we fully sympathise with your feelings. Hard-hearted indeed should we be if we did not feel for you, when you lament, concerning "the Absolution" of your service "that it is not strong enough; that it is a mere declaration, not an announcement of pardon to those who have confessed."‡ Oh what cruelty was there in extinguishing the lights which could

* Preface to the Book of Common Prayer.

† Tract, No. III. p. 4.

‡ Ibid. p. 2.

catch the eye of death,—in removing from you the authorized announcements which alone can give the certainty of pardon ! The infidel will disregard this, but you can distinguish and value the fulness of the comfort. You have described it with the ardour which can belong to the deepest sincerity alone :—“ When he lieth sick upon his bed, does not his Saviour make all his bed in his sickness, when his minister comes to him, to receive the confession of his sins, and to relieve his conscience of the weighty things which press it down ? ”* From the inmost recesses of our heart, beloved brother, we return the sacred sigh you have breathed towards us—“ *Cum talis sis, utinam noster esses.* ”

But why should we be surprised at your just estimation of the blessings of absolution, and of all the several benefits which a duly ordained ministry can bestow ? In no respect are you far from the perception of the truth which the Church has always maintained in reference to such a ministry. Thus you almost feel with us, that ordination is sacramental. “ Ordination,” you declare, “ though it does not precisely come within our definition of a sacrament, is nevertheless a rite partaking, in a high degree, of the sacramental character, and it is by reference to the proper sacraments that its nature can be most satisfactorily illustrated.”† We do not blame you, beloved brethren, for its not coming perfectly within your Church’s definition of a sacrament ; but we feel convinced that, when opportunity may serve, you will so alter the definition as to increase the number of your sacraments.

We cannot but remark how closely all truths are connected together. A just perception of one always leads the mind onwards to the perception of others. Thus your view of ordination has advanced you into a proper intelligence of the powers which have been committed to the apostolical ministry ; of the reverence and prostration of soul with which all are bound to receive them. You have expressed this in language of which our purest Fathers need not be ashamed. Thus you say, “ The christian congregations of the present day, who sit at the feet of ministers duly ordained, have the same reason for reverencing in them the successors of the Apostles as the primitive churches of Ephesus and of Crete had for honouring in Timothy and in Titus the apostolical authority of him who had appointed them.”

* Tract, No. XVII. p. 4.

† Tract, No. V. p. 10.

As this is a claim involving interests not confined to time, but extending themselves to all eternity, it was right not to leave it to a mere assertion, but to draw out the proofs which, having satisfied your own minds, must satisfy the minds of others. The argument has indeed been luminously stated by you; we trust it will be successful.—“The Apostles, indeed, are dead . . . in one sense they are alive; I mean they did not leave the world without appointing persons to take their place; and these persons represent them, and may be considered, with reference to us (of the present day), as if they were apostles. When a man dies his son takes his property, and represents him; that is, in a manner, he still lives in the person of his son. Well, this explains how the Apostles may be said to be still among us; they did not indeed leave their sons to succeed them as Apostles, but they left *spiritual* sons. But, it may be asked, are these spiritual sons of the Apostles still alive? No; all this took place many hundred years ago. These sons and heirs of the Apostles died long since. But then they in turn did not leave the world without committing their sacred office to a fresh set of ministers, and they in turn to another, and so on even to this day. Thus the Apostles had, first, spiritual sons; then spiritual grandsons; then great grandsons; and so on from one age to another down to the present time.”* Assuredly this train of argument will be felt by all, who are not determined upon the total dislocation of society. If the inheritance of any possessions is to be preserved, this inheritance will be properly respected. But you go on to observe,—“Again, it may be asked, who are at this time the successors and spiritual descendants of the Apostles? I shall surprise some people by the answer I shall give, though it is very clear, and there is no doubt about it—THE BISHOPS. They stand in the place of the Apostles. He that despises them despises the Apostles. If we knew them well we should love them for the many excellent graces they possess,—for their piety, loving-kindness, and other virtues. But we do not know them; yet still, for all this, we may honour them as the ministers of Christ, without going so far as to consider their private worth; and we may keep to their fellowship, as we should to that of the Apostles. I say we may all thus honour them, even without knowing them in private, be-

* Tract, No. X. p. 2.

cause of their high office; for they have the mark of CHRIST'S presence upon them, in that they *witness* for Christ, and *suffer* for him." We have cited this passage for the purpose of marking, more strongly, our perfect approval. You were right in carefully excluding the notion of "private worth" as an element of the reverence with which they should be received; because this might be confounded with ordinary respect to merely individual merit, and would not imply a deference to the authority of the Church as such. You have expressed yourselves, indeed, in this respect with all the fulness and perspicuity which we could possibly desire.

While we commend you, however, beloved children, for the clearness with which you have discovered truth to a certain extent, and the manliness with which you have avowed it amidst the scoffs of the infidels who surround you, we feel at the same time that you yourselves would despise us if we did not plainly set before you some points of truth which, as yet, you have not as clearly distinguished. Bear with us, beloved friends, for we mean not to censure, but to instruct: not to upbraid you for your ignorance of just principles, but to point out to you more fully the wholesome and legitimate consequences of those very principles which you yourselves have already embraced.

It would be impossible to extract from any Fathers of the Catholic Church more precise and forcible statements, than you have furnished, of the necessity and the advantages of the Apostolical succession. We shall direct, indeed, that your numerous tracts, on this essential topic of faith, shall be translated into the several languages of the nations still faithful to our authority, and that they shall be used as "Homilies," for the edification of our people. But consider the subject a little more closely. We cannot sufficiently commend the firmness with which you maintain an act of faith towards the Church, in language, not merely clear, but happily expressive: "This," you say, "is Faith, to look at things not as seen, but as unseen; to be as sure that the Bishop is Christ's appointed representative, as if we actually saw upon his head a cloven tongue, like as of fire."*

And again: "The Bishops witness Christ in their very *name*, for he is the true Bishop of our souls, as St. Peter says. They

* Tracts for the Times, No. X. p. 3.

witness Christ in their *station*;—there is but one Lord to save us, and there is but one Bishop in ‘each place.’”

Now set distinctly before your own view the important and guiding principle which you have thus luminously established. Wherever the Church of Christ exists, a Bishop will be found there, deriving his authority from the Apostles by distinct and undisputed succession; and there can be but *one* Bishop in each place. The importance of this principle cannot be too highly estimated, especially in any country abounding, like England, with contending sects; for, as you have well observed to your countrymen, “it greatly simplifies the difficulty of deciding between parties; indeed it reduces our choice to an alternative between two—the Church established among us, and the Latin or Roman-catholic communion.”*

It is something for your country that the question should be thus far simplified. But you go on to observe—“And when we attain to this point, we shall soon see our way quite clear.” We hope so most truly; because, till you have seen your way quite clear, you cannot be in the enjoyment of a perfect peace. Now we conceive that we can greatly assist you, beloved brethren, in this stage of your argument. The cause of your perplexity, as we glean it from your writings, is this.—You have been led to think, that the Church established by law amongst you possesses duly consecrated Bishops, and that the Roman communion does not. In both points, however, we anticipate but little difficulty in our anxious endeavours to set you right. For on what grounds do you maintain that your Established Church possesses Bishops? Because you think—“As to the fact of apostolical succession, every link in the chain is known, from St. Peter to our present metropolitans.”† But surely you are aware of all the circumstances of the Nag’s-head consecration. This must, at least, diminish confidence as to the continuity of your links, and compel every reasonable mind to doubt respecting the reality of your succession. Now even a doubt on such a point is fatal to all the claims of your Church.

But, in the next place, what reason have you to doubt that the Roman communion does possess Bishops in England? You know and admit that we had Bishops there formerly; and, we

* Tracts for the Times. (Records of the Church, No. XXIV.)

† Tract, No. VII. p. 2.

would ask you, when did we withdraw them? Was the Church dependent for its existence upon the passions of a tyrant, or the caprices of a woman? No; you have clearly and distinctly raised your voice against so absurd and blasphemous a supposition. "Are we content to be accounted the mere creation of the State, as schoolmasters and teachers may be, or soldiers, or magistrates, or other public officers? Did the State make us? Can it unmake us? Can it send out missionaries? Can it arrange dioceses? Surely all these are spiritual functions; and, laymen may as well set about preaching and consecrating the bread and wine, as assume these."* You admit—"No one can say the British legislature is Christian."† And you, therefore, indignantly reject the notion of its interference! But, we would ask of you, was Henry VIII. Christian? What gave him any power over the Church? Was he enrolled in the apostolical succession? Be consistent, brethren; you justly make it a matter of complaint that your "legislature has lately taken upon itself to remodel the dioceses of Ireland;—a proceeding which involves the appointment of certain Bishops over certain clergy, and of certain clergy under certain Bishops,"‡ and you strongly recommend "that the Irish Church should meet in synod, and protest herself against what has been done."§ We shall feel it our pleasing duty to receive her protest; but, in the mean time, consider that if the State have no right, according to your own confession, even to remodel dioceses, much less can it have a right totally to extinguish them, and to put an end to the jurisdiction which the Church exercised within them.

We feel, therefore, that we are entitled, upon your own principles, to assert that our Bishops have never lost their authority in England; and that we are at full liberty, when we please it, to send over to you faithful men, deriving apostolical authority from ourselves. If you still hesitate, however, (and we know not how you can,) we shall terminate all your hesitation by the following appeal to your own consciences and good sense.

You admit that we are a Bishop in our city of Rome. You have no doubt concerning our apostolical succession; and have no doubt, consequently, that we are to be "reverenced as Christ's representative," as decidedly as if you "actually saw upon our head a cloven tongue like as of fire." We invite you, therefore,

* Tract, No. II.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

§ Ibid.

into our presence; and while we exercise our apostolic functions towards you, you will, as in duty bound, submit implicitly to our instructions. That, therefore, which we teach in Rome must be true, and our children will not, by questioning its truth, make shipwreck of their own faith and of a good conscience. Now, dear children, we appeal to yourselves. Is truth divided? Can that be false in England which is true in Rome? Is not the Catholic Church more extended than that of which you profess to be members? Is not that which is true at Rome true in every quarter of the Catholic world; for have we not Bishops in every clime? Is it not far more probable than those whom you call Bishops in England have failed in the point of apostolical succession, than that there should be two truths? We speak as unto wise men; judge ye what we say. The Apostles did not differ in doctrine from each other, neither can those who are to be received undoubtingly as the representatives of the Apostles. You do not doubt that we and the Catholic Bishops are "successors of the Apostles;" and that all "have the same reason for reverencing us as the primitive churches of Ephesus and of Crete had for honouring in Timothy and in Titus the apostolical authority of him who had appointed them." Would those primitive churches have revered Titus or Timothy, if, leaning to their own understanding, they had rejected their instruction? No, beloved children; you will not act worse than the infidel;—he rejects our instruction because he presumptuously denies our authority. You will not be so inconsistent as, while you discard his principles, to adopt his practice!

We would urge you, dear children, to weigh this argument well: and it will convince you that the views which the Catholic Church has taken of your Nag's-head ordination *must* be true. From the very fact which you admit,—that we are the successors of the Apostles, to be revered like them, you might conclude that those who have assumed the office of Bishops in England can have no claim to this authority, because you cannot reverence us and them; but lest you might be perplexed, it was wisely ordered that the falsehood of their consecration should have been made known to all men by the mode in which it took place.

Dear brethren, you have well and truly described the source

of all the evils which in later years have perplexed the Church, and brought ruin upon so many who might otherwise have remained undoubtingly in her peaceful bosom.—“At the Reformation the authority of the Church was discarded by the spirit then predominant among Protestants, and Scripture was considered as the sole document both for ascertaining and improving our faith. The question immediately arose,—‘Is this or that doctrine in Scripture?’ and, in consequence, various intellectual gifts, such as argumentative subtilty, critical acumen, knowledge of the languages, rose into importance, and became the interpreters of Christian truth.”*

Never have we seen the causes of all our evils more clearly developed. You have traced the miseries which have flowed in upon the world through the flood-gates of the Reformation, from their first origin through all their successive stages. 1st, The authority of the Church was discarded;—2nd, It was thought, as a necessary consequence, that men were to learn the doctrines of Christianity from the Bible; and, 3rdly, This led to the study of Hebrew and of Greek, and raised into an undue and dangerous importance those intellectual gifts which are the bane of well-ordered society; but for these vain studies you might still have been included in the unity of the faith; but for these, men would not have looked upon you with suspicion, as you pathetically complain in various passages of your tracts; they would have had no “misgivings, lest the doctrines you have been advocating should lead to Popery;”† for that which they call Popery would have been universally acknowledged and unhesitatingly received as the Catholic truth. Popery indeed! O, how corrupted are the hearts and imaginations of men when, contrary to the just principles of apostolical succession, which you have advocated, a term of reproach is borrowed from adhesion to us, the representative of the greatest of the Apostles,—as if to maintain the unity of the Church was matter of reproach! And what advantages have been gained by discarding the authority of the Church? What has “critical acumen and the knowledge of the languages,” conferred upon the natives of Christendom? The explanation perhaps of some “ambiguous word,”—as, for instance, the word “Hell” in the Apostles’ Creed;—yet, after all, as you have justly remarked, “is it any

* Tract, No. XLV. p. 1.

† Tract, No. XX. p. 1.

great harm if it is misunderstood, and is it not very difficult to find any substitute for it in harmony with the composition of the Creed? * Truly the tastes of these men are as perverted as their judgments. To their fancied acquirements, in truth, they would even sacrifice all the graces of antiquity. They conceived that no word should be used unless it be understood of the people. And yet, if *faith* be retained, what great harm is there if *words* be misunderstood? Thus for the sake of securing merely imaginary advantages,—for the sake of indulging the pride of intellect,—“the idea of united worship, with a view to which identity of time and language had been maintained in different nations, was forgotten;” † and your misguided Reformers, “conscious of the incongruity of primitive forms and modern feelings, undertook to construct a service more in accordance with the spirit of their age; they adopted the English language; they curtailed the already compressed ritual of the early Christians.”

Deeply do we sympathise with the regret which our beloved children have expressed for this proceeding. Your words are not the cold calculating expressions of truth and soberness; they have evidently burst from the hearts of men who are alive to all the sensibilities of poetry. “The Catholic ritual was a precious possession; and if we who have escaped from Popery have lost not only the possession, but the sense of its value, it is a serious question whether we are not like men who recover from some grievous illness with the loss or injury of their sight or hearing;—whether we are not like the Jews returned from captivity, who could never find the rod of Aaron, or the ark of the covenant, which, indeed, had ever been hid from the world, but then was removed from the Temple itself.” ‡ It is true the world, by whom you are surrounded, have lost their sight and hearing; but you, beloved children, retain both. Oh! when you have returned to the temple, with what joy will you behold the rod of Aaron and the ark of the covenant still preserved in its mystic depositaries. With what delight will you behold the splendour of our ritual! What new sensations of piety will throb within your bosoms as you prostrate yourselves with reverence before our holy altar! The ark of the covenant will

* Tract, No. III. p. 2.

† Tract, No. IX. p. 2.

‡ Tract, No. XXXIV.

be presented to your view; the real cross will offer itself to your vision; the relics of holy martyrs will animate your devotions; nor will you be pained by the absence of the prayer (which you say has been excluded from the English ritual) "for the rest and peace of all those who have departed this life in God's faith and fear." You have justly remarked, that "prayers for the dead" formed a portion of those liturgies which have emanated from St. Peter, St. James, St. Mark, and St. John;* and when you join with us in these devotions, you will feel a new proof within you that the Church which has retained this office is alone worthy of your regard.

We anticipate that you will feel this joy from the pleasure with which you have cited, for the benefit of your readers, a description of such services as we have retained, but which have been abandoned by your Church.

"To begin with baptism—we are plunged in the water, &c. &c. After coming out of it, we taste a mixture of milk and honey, and for a whole week from that day we abstain from our daily bath. We sign our forehead with the cross whenever we set out and walk, go in or out, dress, gird on our sandals, bathe, eat, light our lamps, sit or lie down to rest—whatever we do. If you demand a scriptural rule for these and such like observances, we can give you none; all we say to you is, that tradition directs, usage sanctions, faith obeys."† And again, "Of those articles of doctrine and preaching which are in the custody of the Church, some come to us in Scripture itself, some are conveyed to us by a continuous tradition in mystical depositaries. Both have equal claims on our devotion, and are received by all—at least by all who are in any respect Churchmen; for, should we attempt to supersede the usages which are not enjoined in Scripture, as important, we should do most serious injury to evangelical truth; nay, reduce it to a bare name. To take an obvious instance . . . Where does Scripture teach us to turn to the east in prayer? . . . Moreover we bless the water of baptism, and the oil for anointing . . . After the example of Moses, the Apostles and Fathers who modelled the Churches were accustomed to lodge their sacred doctrine in mystic forms, as being secretly and silently conveyed. . . . This is the reason why there is a tradition of observances independent of Scripture,

* Tract, No. LXIII.

† Tract, No. XXXIV.

lest doctrines, being exposed to the world should be so familiar as to be despised."* You have doubtless placed before your own view distinctly the solemn statements of this luminous quotation: 1st, traditionary observances and the truths of Scripture are of equal authority; 2ndly, if these traditionary observances were laid aside, evangelical truth would be reduced to a mere name; and 3rdly, it is dangerous to expose doctrines to the world, lest, by being made familiar, they should be despised. These are the principles which have ever guided the Catholic Church; by deviating from these, the nations of Europe have fallen into anarchy and confusion; and it is only by zealous efforts, such as our children of the University are now making for the restoration of those principles, that peace and harmony and unity can be reproduced.

We can perceive by various passages in your tracts, as, indeed, we might have anticipated of ourselves, that you are surrounded by persons who are terrified by the notions of popery and priestcraft. Under such circumstances, the most perfect prudence is essential. On the whole, we greatly commend your course of proceeding; but we must take the liberty of pointing out to our children some points in which our parental and anxious observation have discovered defects. We shall cite a paragraph for the purpose of offering some remarks upon it.

"And now I would ask, in conclusion, where is the essential difference between the apostolic age and our own, as to the relation in which God's ministers and his people stand to each other? I do not say that the ministers of his word in these days can feel so sure as the Apostles could, that in the commandments which they give they have the Spirit of God; very far from it. But I do say, that neither can the people feel so sure as in those days of miraculous gifts that they have the Spirit of God with them, and thus the relation between the two parties remains unaltered."

Now, it will be said in reply by your adversaries, that if the clergy and people were sure that no divine influence accompanied ministerial labours, the relation between them would be, not altered merely, but annihilated. And in proportion as either party doubts that there is such an influence vouchsafed, he doubts the existence of the relation for which you are con-

* Tract, No. XXXIV.

tending. It is very true that the relation between a tutor and his pupil may be continued, even if it be supposed that the knowledge of both parties were diminished, because the requisite superiority in point of knowledge may be still possessed by the tutor; but the relation between the duly ordained minister and his flock is wholly of a different kind; it is built, not only on the fact that the minister is assisted by divine co-operation, but on the full confidence in this fact by both the parties.

You will consequently be taunted with having said that even in case the whole foundation of the relation between the minister and his people is suspected, or believed to have little reality in it, still the idea of the relation should be maintained. And this will be denominated priestcraft—a device for the benefit of the clergy. You should carefully guard against awakening such a suspicion, for you will be denominated “blind leaders of the blind.”

There is another feature in the paragraph just quoted, which we lament, but can scarcely blame. You imply a doubt concerning the important principle which at other times you have maintained as firmly as we could desire, namely that duly ordained ministers of the present day are to be received with the same reverence as was due to Titus or Timothy. This doubt is intimated in your admission, that you are far from being sure that they have similar divine aid to that which was conferred on the Apostles. This manifests weakness of faith and inconsistency. But we do not pronounce censure on this account: considering the circumstances of your country, we are more disposed to praise you for what you have attained, than to judge you concerning your deficiencies. But our beloved children will suffer the word of exhortation, while we shall point out, that you have been, both here and in other places, on the verge of departure from that truth which in many respects you have zealously maintained.

We noticed that in one sentence you incidentally introduced, without the necessary qualifying clauses, “purity of doctrine,” as constituting one mark of the Catholic Church. It is very true that it is so. But you should have expressed this by saying, the Catholic Church has truth on its side. We must first point out what the Catholic Church is, and then maintain that what it teaches is true. You have referred to that remark-

able passage of the Apostle, in which he states, that "the Church is the pillar and ground of the truth," and you have most properly passed over the heretical punctuation of this passage as unworthy of notice.* This was right. But you act inconsistently with all this, when you make "purity of doctrine" a mark by which the Church is to be discerned, for this is to suppose that individuals are to decide what is pure doctrine. Now manifestly it is the Church which is to decide this; your mode of statement would let in all the evils of private judgment. That which the Church, under the government of men deriving their authority from the Apostles, declares to be all true, all are bound to receive as truth. If the doctrines of the Church are received, only because they are judged to be true by individual examination, this is to follow merely the guidance of your own mind as heathens may do. Faith in the Church, on the other hand, is manifested by receiving what it teaches as truth, because it teaches it. And consider, brethren, what perplexity attends your principle. Suppose an individual commences an examination of truth, with the vain hope that he is capable of discerning it, he will, as you must be aware, fall into most unwarranted opinions. These, however, he will regard as true, and he will consider the adoption of these opinions by any sect as so far a mark that that sect constitutes the true Church. But, again, he must see that the ministry of that Church have not, and in most cases do not pretend to have, an apostolic ministry. On the other hand, this essential mark of the true Church will be found by him in us: while the pride of reason, which led him unhappily into the examination of truth, unbiassed by our authority, has terminated in his adopting opinions at variance with our teaching. Observe instantly what perplexity arises; his views of doctrine will lead him into communion with one body; the fact of apostolical succession again should compel him to join another. Such is the unhappy result of your inconsistent principles. But what would you yourselves say to him in such a case? Surely this:—Unhappy

* Tract, No. XI. p. 4. *Note by the Translator.*—The following is the heretical punctuation alluded to:—

"That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God.

"The pillar and ground of the truth and without controversy great, is the mystery of godliness."—1 Tim. iii. 15.

man! your views of doctrine are the unauthorized results of your own imagination. In these you *may* be mistaken; while apostolical succession is *a fact* about which there can be no mistake. You are bound, therefore, to adhere to that communion which furnishes this incontrovertible test; and when you have once joined this communion and adopted its instructions, your perplexities will be ended, and peace be restored to your now wretched mind. But why not adopt with simplicity from the very first that criterion to which you are ultimately driven? No, brethren, you cannot adhere to apostolical succession, if, at the same time, you make private judgment a co-equal authority.

It is astonishing, indeed, how much heretics mistake or misrepresent our teaching in this particular. They imagine that we point out many marks of a true church. We do no such thing. We inculcate that the true Catholic Church is *that* which acknowledges the successor of St. Peter, the chief Apostle, as its head and guide. And the other points which heretics represent us as stating to be marks of the Church, are merely regarded by us as characteristics which belong to it, and to it alone, and not as guides by which it is to be discovered.

We think, however, brethren, that your error is not wilful, but merely the result of the prejudices by which you are surrounded. Nor has this error imprinted itself deeply on your minds; on the contrary, we feel confident that it will speedily disappear; for we cannot but observe with the liveliest pleasure that there are but a few passages in your writings in which purity of doctrine is stated to be a guide to the discovery of the Catholic Church; while, on the other hand, you have above twenty long tracts to prove that Apostolical succession is its essential and most important test.

And now, brethren, suffer from us once more the word of exhortation. We regard you as missionaries in a still benighted land. You have difficulties to combat, and you will have need to exert the utmost caution and prudence in your proceedings. We would urge you, therefore, to study attentively, and to adopt for your own guidance the instructions which we have ever given to those faithful men whom we have employed to win over others to the one true faith.

At present we shall only specify two points of our instruction:—

In the first place, we have always urged them not to expose their doctrines too openly to the public view ; to be satisfied in the first instance that much ignorance should remain, and only to press truth gradually as the minds of men seemed prepared for its reception. These precautions we would urge upon your attention, because we perceive, from many portions of your tracts, that those around you have some misgivings that you are attached to what they call Popery. Do not awaken any such suspicions by avoidable imprudence. Rather be satisfied with a slow progress than run the risk of injuring the work in which you are engaged. Let it be yours to sow the seed, and those who shall be raised up after you will water the plant. Knowing, for instance, the feeling which exists amongst your heretical countrymen, we cannot but think it imprudent that you should have used language so open as that which you have adopted, when you speak of duly ordained ministers "as intrusted with the keys of heaven and hell, and with the awful and mysterious gift of making the bread and wine Christ's body and blood."* Again, you will awaken suspicion prematurely by your intimating, "that to administer the Lord's Supper to the dying and insensible is not superstitious ;" as well as by your complaint, that "a superstitious apprehension of resting in the sacraments, has, alas, infected a large mass of men in your communion."† This is a bad state of things ; but you must be prudent in your censures. Avoid plainness of declaration ; it will produce suspicion and distrust of your teaching. In some respects, indeed, you have acted with prudence as far as this doctrine is concerned. Thus, while we perceive with delight that you have always spoken in your own persons in accordance with our sentiments on this head ; you have, at the same time, selected some tracts from early writers of your communion, in which our sentiments are impugned. These old tracts will not be read with much attention, compared at least with your own more lively productions ; they can too be readily withdrawn when it is expedient, for they are not a pledge of your opinions as strong as your own writing. In the meantime you may appeal to your republication of them as a proof that you have not leagued yourselves with us.

Another piece of advice which we shall give to you (as we give

* Tract, No. X. p. 4.

† Advertisement to the Second Volume of Tracts.

it to all our Missionaries), is that you should adopt every means to undermine the influence of those whose writings hold out no hope that they may be won over to the true Church. They are in truth dangerous men, and you should represent them as such. Be not deceived by their apparent amiability, by their virtuous conduct, or by their extent of learning. These very circumstances render them the more to be dreaded. Suffer not such men to be the instructors of youth. Do not permit them to occupy those places which public spirit alone ought to make you anxious to occupy, even independently of any desire for your individual advancement. If from having imbibed the spirit of the Reformers they discard the authority of the Church, and ask on every occasion, with prying curiosity, "Is this or that doctrine in Scripture?"—if they conceive that "argumentative subtilty, and critical acumen, and a knowledge of the languages," are the interpreters of Christian truth, and not the Church—denounce them at once as unsound in the faith, as heretics, as Socinians. Should they reply to you that their interpretation of Scripture agrees with your own, and that they have explained the Scriptures so as to prove they are not Socinians; still, if they require that every doctrine should be proved by Scripture;—if they hesitate to receive what the Church has adopted, if they examine with scrupulosity the meaning of expressions, which, as you have justly stated, there can be no great harm in misunderstanding,—on this account denounce them as Socinians, no matter how they may interpret Scripture. And if you are called upon to defend yourselves from the charge of calumny, you have provided a defence in a noble passage of your Tracts, which we can never sufficiently admire;—you can triumphantly appeal to your own writings to prove, that you have always maintained, on abstract grounds, even when you were not assailing individuals, that the doctrine of the Trinity is not explicitly revealed in Scripture; and therefore, that to rely on Scripture as the depository of truth, must at least be an overt act to Socinianism. We shall cite the passage we allude to, because we delight in transcribing truth, and because we would recommend our beloved children to have it engraven on the doors of their houses as a public announcement of the orthodoxy of their faith, and the righteousness of their conduct.

"What shall we say, when we consider that a case of *doctrine*,

necessary doctrine, doctrine the very highest and most sacred, may be produced, where the argument lies as little on the surface of Scripture—where the proof, though *most conclusive*, is as indirect and circuitous as that for Episcopacy; viz. the doctrine of the Trinity? Where is this solemn and comfortable mystery formally stated in Scripture, as we find it in the creeds? Why is it not? Let a man consider whether all the objections which he urges against the Scripture argument for Episcopacy may not be turned against his own belief in the Trinity. It is a happy thing for themselves that men are inconsistent; yet it is miserable to advocate and establish a *principle*, which, not in their own case indeed, but in the case of others who learn it of them, leads to Socinianism.”*

We cannot conclude without suggesting an important caution with reference to our adversaries, to which you do not appear to have been sufficiently attentive. You have intimated your agreement with them as to a matter which has served to render them unpopular. This was unnecessary. You should neither mix yourselves with their unpopularity, nor so speak as to relieve them in any degree from it. The passages of your Tracts to which we allude are these. “In like manner, the words in Genesis ii. and the practice of the Apostles in the Acts, are quite warrant enough for the sanctification of the Lord’s Day, even though the fourth commandment were not binding on us.”† And another passage:—“Again, while the observance of the Lord’s Day was grounded upon the *practice* of the Apostles, it was somehow felt, that this proof was not *strong enough* to bind the mass of Protestants: and so the chief argument now in use is one drawn from the Jewish law, viz. the direct Scripture *command*, contained in the fourth commandment.”‡ We are aware that this doctrine has been put forward by the very men whom we have least hope of conciliating, inasmuch as they constantly declare that it is a duty to ask in every point—“Is this doctrine to be found in Scripture?” Now, if you intimate even indirectly, as in the passages cited, that you suspect them to be right with regard to the foundation upon which the observance of Sunday rests, you may awaken a suspicion that they may be right in other respects also. This will not only bring these men into a repute

* Tract, No. XLV. p. 5.

† Ibid. No. VIII.

‡ Ibid. No. XLV.

especially dangerous to the good cause, but is likely also to be attended with the danger of exciting a general spirit of inquiry ; for if men begin to think that they have been wrong on a single point, they will become inclined to examine all other particulars of their system. You have constantly spoken of "the bad tendencies of Protestantism ;" you should be cautious not to rouse them into a greater activity. Rather seek to produce a quietness of mind, an absence of investigation, by such passages as the following, which indeed we ourselves might have written.—"Surely I am more safe, more likely to come in for a share of these blessings, if, while in other things, I strive to do my duty without troubling myself to decide things which, in truth, are too hard for me, I continue a member of the (established) Church. By so doing, I follow the example of my forefathers, of my country, of holy martyrs before me, and rest my faith on the authority of those who are, by virtue of their office, successors of the Apostles ; whereas, in the other case, I must, on my own judgment, set aside all this weight of authority, and do that, which is as much as to say, that till within the last three hundred years the whole world has been in darkness, and that I can see clearer than all those great, and good, and pious, and learned persons, who have lived and died before me in this faith."*

This is perfect unexceptionable wisdom.

And now, beloved brethren, farewell. May you long continue burning and shining lights amidst a perverse generation, and be ye comforted amidst the troubles which may surround you ; for, persevere in the righteous course you have adopted, and we promise faithfully that, hereafter, when you come to lie on the bed of sickness, we shall send to you a minister of the One true Church "to receive the confession of your sins, and to relieve your conscience of the weighty things which shall press it down."

GIVEN UNDER OUR HAND IN ROME.

* Tract, No. LI. p. 14.

No. XIV.

"We are not as [the] many who *corrupt** the Word of God."

"WELL," it may be said by some, after reading our last Cautions, "individuals in the tract-party may have gone too far; and even the whole party may, as a party, be not free from blame. And, no doubt, the principle of 'reserve' in religious teaching, may be liable (as every one will admit that many good things are) to abuse. But, still, there surely is some reason in it, after all."

"Can you believe, for instance," it will be asked, "that the mass of the People can ever be brought to comprehend the *deeper mysteries* of theology,—the difference between the 'eternal filiation' of the Son and the 'procession' of the Holy Spirit, the consistency of the distinction of 'persons' with the 'unity of substance'† in the divine nature; not to speak of points still more obscure; and which even the profoundest Divines find it hard to state with precision? And yet, if they cannot comprehend such matters as these, how can they be fully taught the doctrine of the Trinity?" And so, of the rest.

Now it must be granted that there are, in what is commonly called "Theology," very many things quite beyond the comprehension of the mass of the people, and which it would be utterly idle ever to attempt to teach them. And, consequently, those who hold that this school-divinity is an essential part of the Gospel, will not easily avoid being forced to allow the necessity of a "double doctrine,"—one Gospel to be preached to the poor, and another studied by the learned.‡

But the truth is, that a very large part of this profound

* The word denotes properly adulteration of wine.

† By "substance" it is to be observed that hearers, unaccustomed to metaphysics, almost always understand *material substance*.

‡ Some very subtle distinctions, however, in Roman-catholic theology seem, on the one hand, *necessary*, on Romish principles, to be understood by the ignorant, and, on the other, *impossible* to be understood by them;—such as the difference between *Latria*, the worship due only to God; *Hyperdulia*, the worship due to the Virgin

theology, is nothing better than a mere jargon of words without meaning, unintelligible even to "the learned" themselves; and in respect of which the people have already this great advantage over such teachers,—that the people are aware of their own ignorance of these matters, while their teachers pride themselves on understanding what really cannot be understood. Sometimes, indeed, when they are pressed with objections to their own *explanations* of Scripture-doctrines, Divines are apt to say that these are mysteries which cannot be understood by even the most exalted intellects, and that it is impious to pry into them too curiously, or bring them to the test of reason. But then the answer is obvious,—“if you do not understand these things, why do you undertake to explain them?—To everything, indeed, which God has revealed, the deepest reverence and the lowest submission are due; but not so, to *Man's* explication of it. If we venture to give a *further account* of what he has said, it should, at least, be a rational and intelligible account. In short, whatever you teach us, should be, either what God has required us to believe (however mysterious that may be) *or else* what man can prove and see to be reasonable. But let us have no mysteries of Man's making.”

But the doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Atonement, &c., so far as they are really *revealed* in Scripture, may certainly be understood by men of ordinary capacities; since it was to men of ordinary capacities (for the most part) that the Apostles wrote the books of the New Testament; and it is not reasonable to think that they would have deliberately laid before their readers such statements as they knew could have no meaning to those readers.

A plain man, then, at the present day, if he will consent to become a diligent and humble learner, may be brought, by good instruction, to comprehend all that was revealed, through the Apostles and Evangelists, to plain men in their times.

And such persons may, further, be brought to perceive, that anything not *revealed* in Scripture, even if intelligible and true, cannot be part of the GOSPEL, since *that* was preached to the

Mary; and *Dulia*, the honour given to other saints. If they say, that it is no matter what mistakes are practically made in such things, as long as men *intend* to do what the Church directs, this is to deny their own assertion of the necessity of infallible guidance. If the *intention* be sufficient for them, why may not the intention of doing whatever Christ directs be sufficient for Protestants, though differing among themselves as to the matter of fact—what it is that Christ does direct?

learned and unlearned alike ; unless, indeed, they believe that a *further* revelation has been given to the Schoolmen and Divines of later ages, which sets them far above the Evangelists and Apostles.

Many ingenious *theories* have, indeed, from time to time, been devised and set forth, to explain and reconcile the statements of Scripture, with respect to the Trinity, the Atonement, the divine Decrees, and other matters, on which the Bible gives us only imperfect information. On such subjects, men have taken up the hints which the Sacred Writers seemed to drop, and sought to follow them up, by conjecturing what the full account of the matter *may* be ;* and then they have gone on to settle that this account, which they have conjectured, *must* be the true one, because it gives what they think a satisfactory solution of much that is difficult without it ; and so they have finally made their own theories a part of the Gospel.

But it would be much safer, and more reasonable, to consider what is *not taught*, with respect to these matters, in Scripture, as *withheld*, doubtless, because the knowledge of it would not be suitable to our present state in this life. In such a case, it is both foolish and presumptuous to seek to pluck the fruit of the forbidden tree of knowledge. What Scripture has left obscure, we should be satisfied to let remain obscure, until God Himself sees fit to clear it up ; and, instead of looking out for theories and satisfactory accounts of "how these things can be," we should be content to say, plainly, "I do not know."†

There is, you remember, an old proverb, that "a fool can ask more questions than a wise man can answer ;" but you may very fairly, if you please, add this as a *rider* to it ;—"A wise man cannot ask more questions than he will find fools *ready* to answer."

But it should have struck those learned persons who have made their own conjectural theology a part of Christ's Gospel, to consider how much (according to their view) *they must have supplied of the deficiencies of Scripture*. They have told us things which, though they may be deductions from deductions &c. from Scripture, are certainly not *taught* there ; and if they

* In theology, what Bacon called the *idola theatri* are peculiarly apt to mislead.

† "Nescire velle quæ magister optimus
Docere non vult, erudita inscitia est."

Scaliger.

would reflect on this, they might consider next, "can it be that *we* are able and authorized thus to enlarge a divine Revelation? Is there not a lie in our right hand? Have we not been making to ourselves a God 'fashioned according to the beauty of a man?'"

In respect of writers upon human science, this is all very proper. We may acknowledge, for example, Aristotle as our master in logic, or Adam Smith in political economy, or Euclid in geometry, &c., and yet go on to develop many consequences from their principles which they either purposely concealed, or did not perceive, or did not know how to explain clearly. But it cannot be allowable or safe to do this with respect to Scripture.

It is said, indeed, that all these explanations and developments are *based on Scripture*. And as truly may it be said that all the deepest works of geometricians are based upon the definitions of Euclid. But it cannot be said that Euclid, therefore, either taught or knew all these theorems. And it is no less plain that many of the theological theorems that are afloat were not *taught* by the Apostles. Either Paul *did not know* the solutions proposed, or they must have been among the things revealed to him in the third heaven, "which it is not lawful (possible*) for a man to utter."

The very *satisfactoriness*, therefore, (to some minds,) of such disquisitions, ought to be a proof that the attempt is a presumptuous folly, and the result an utter failure.

It may be added, that the *analogical* language in which, necessarily, the things concerning God are spoken of in Scripture, is an additional snare to presumptuous speculators. The Sacred Writers instruct us upon such subjects very much as you would instruct a blind man about sight and the objects of sight, by comparing them with the other senses and their objects. Even so they describe things which we cannot fully comprehend by the analogy of things with which we are acquainted; and we must be careful, in such cases, not to press the analogy farther than the purpose for which it is used by them requires. For if we interpret any analogical expression too literally, we are acting as foolishly as if we were to *dissect a statue*, in order to find out what the *inside* of a man is like. The statue was only *meant*

* Οὐκ ἔστιν.

to give us an idea of the outward form and expression of him whom it represents: and the language in which Scripture speaks of God and the things of another life, describes them only so far as we are practically concerned with them; and, therefore, we must not look, in such descriptions, for information respecting such matters as they are in themselves, and unconnected with *our* practical relations to them; any more than we should look for the inward structure of the human body in the statue or picture of a man.

The difference between *Religious* knowledge, properly so called, and what may be more properly styled theological *Philosophy*, may be thus illustrated. Different theories, we know, have prevailed at different times, to account for the motions of the planets,—the moon, and other heavenly bodies,—the tides, and various other subjects pertaining to natural philosophy. Several of these theories, which supplanted one another, have now become obsolete; and modern discoveries have established, on good grounds, explanations of most of these points. But the great *mass of mankind* cannot be expected to understand these explanations. There are, however, many points of daily *practical* use, which they *can* understand, and which it is needful for them to be informed upon. Accordingly, there are printed tables (in our almanacks), showing the times of the sun's rising and setting at each period of the year,—the appearances of the moon,—the times of eclipses,—the variations of the tides in different places, and the like. And all these are sufficiently intelligible, without any study of astronomy, even to such plain unlearned men as the shepherds who visited Jesus at Bethlehem. The practical knowledge thus conveyed involves no astronomical theory, but may be equally reconciled with the Ptolemaic or the Copernican systems of the universe. It is not the less possible, nor the less useful, for any one to know the times when the sun gives light to this earth, even though he should not know whether it is the sun that moves, or the earth.

Now, it is just such practical knowledge as this that the Scriptures give us of the Christian Dispensation. They afford practical directions, but no theory. But there is this important difference between the two cases. The human faculties could, and at length did (though it is beyond the great mass of mankind) discover the true theory of the appearances and

motions of the heavenly bodies. In matters pertaining to divine Revelation, on the contrary, though there must actually *be* a true theory (since there must *be* reasons, and those known to God Himself, even if hidden from every *creature*, why He proceeded in this way rather than in that) this theory never can be *known* to us; because the whole subject is so far above the human powers, that we must have remained, but for Revelation, in the darkest ignorance concerning it. Many curious and valuable truths has the world discovered by philosophy (or, as our translators express it, "wisdom"); but "the world" (says Paul) "by wisdom knew not *God*:" of which assertion the writings of the ancient heathen philosophers, now extant, afford sufficient proofs.

It must not, however, be inferred from anything that has been said, that we are against the employment of reason in matters pertaining to religion, and that we would have each man read the Bible without aid from others, or reflection of his own, and adopt the notion that comes first into his mind. We should study to be wise, not *above* Scripture, but *in* Scripture; to learn, not the things which God has *concealed*, but what He has *declared*. And the most learned and able man could hardly, with a whole life's labour, place himself perfectly on a level with the plain unlearned men whom the Apostles addressed; who were familiar from childhood with customs, occurrences, places, &c., which call for much research from *us*, to gain any knowledge of.

But as for *developing* some *system* or *theory* which was not revealed *to*—or at least not revealed *by*—the Apostles, a man may gain much popularity, indeed, by this kind of speculation, among the unwise or unthinking, but he will mislead them and himself with this superstructure of "wood, hay, and stubble." "Sir, in these matters," said one of our reformers, "I am so fearful, that I dare not speak further, yea, almost none otherwise, than *as the Scripture doth as it were lead me by the hand*."

"Well, but after all," it may be said, "you have granted that there is some kind of knowledge intimately connected with religion that is placed beyond the reach of the mass of mankind. You grant that a life's labour will hardly place us on a level with those to whom the Scriptures were originally addressed;

and you cannot expect that the mass of mankind will devote a life's labour to the study of the original languages of Scripture, and all the various points of history, criticism, &c., which are requisite for the full interpretation of it. And if so, is not this acknowledging that much has been revealed to some which it would be idle to attempt to communicate to others?"

Now this would be a very strong objection, if we said, as some fanatical persons have said, that Christians stood in no need of *instructors*; but as it is, there is really no force in it. For he who by diligent study of the original Scriptures discovers more and more of their true meaning, may and ought to lay the *result* of his studies before those who have not leisure or ability for such researches; and he may, by taking pains, do this in such a manner as to make what he teaches quite intelligible to those who could never have made those discoveries for themselves. And this seems the very purpose for which the Christian Ministry was instituted. They are, or ought to be, an Order of learned Christians, whose duty it is to instruct their brethren, by helping them to perceive and understand what Christ has taught to all his disciples; as we have already explained to you in Caution V., Part 2, pp. 94—97.

The Scriptures, indeed, are not written in the form best suited for conveying elementary instruction in the truths of religion to plain illiterate men; because they were (for the most part*) addressed to persons who had already received the rudiments of the faith. But they are, nevertheless, the only documents from which we can certainly discover what the apostolic teaching was. And the clergy, therefore, are bound to prove—and to prove to the satisfaction of their hearers—that the doctrines which they deliver are the doctrines of *Scripture*.

Most school-books, you know, are so drawn up, as to require, generally, the help of a teacher to make them plain and easy to learners; but after a young person has come, with the aid of his instructor, to understand a treatise upon arithmetic, or algebra, or geometry; he does not receive the propositions contained in it on the word of his teacher, but because he himself perceives them to be true. And so, though the mass of mankind may

* We say, "for the most part;" because they do certainly contain—as the Acts of the Apostles, for example—reports, though very slight and scanty reports, of some of the elementary teaching given to the first converts.

need the help of instructors to enable them to understand Scripture, yet *with* that help, they may be able ultimately to judge for themselves of the meaning of Scripture.

Indeed, those hasty and enthusiastic persons who boast their independence upon all instructors, would do well to remember *what is* that very book—the English Bible itself—from the unassisted study of which they profess to draw their knowledge of the Gospel. It is a *translation*; for which they are indebted to the labours of the learned. And they should reflect, that a translation is really nothing less than an exposition of the meaning of the Original, according to the best judgment of the translators. They might thus, even themselves, be brought to see the folly and groundlessness of what they say. And if they were once brought to acknowledge their need of instructors for obtaining even *any* knowledge *at all* of the meaning of the original Scriptures; they would be better prepared to avail themselves of that further aid which our Church designed that its clergy should afford to its unlearned members.

For, if you will read over the office for the Ordination of priests in our Prayer-book, you will see that the Clergy of our own Church are a standing monument of the Church's design—of the view which its founders and its Reformers took of the manner in which Scripture should be used. The Clergy are members of a profession devoted by our Church to the business not merely of administering the sacraments, but of “instructing out of the Scriptures the people committed to their charge.” Now, if the fathers of our Church had thought a knowledge of Scripture noxious or needless to the mass of the people, they would have *left* it in the *original tongues*. If, again, they had held the Church's traditions to be of equal or superior authority, they would have appointed an Order of men to instruct the people in a system constructed out of *Scripture and Tradition* “blended together” (as the Tractites express it) and combined into a whole. Or if, on the other hand, they had deemed the Bible a sufficient and safe guide to any one who should open it at random, and interpret and apply, according to his own taste, or fancy, or convenience, any passage his eye might casually fall upon, without seeking any ordinary helps to the right understanding of it;—if this had been the view of our Reformers, they would have contented themselves with putting forth a

translation of the Bible for each man to use and apply for himself, or expound to others, as he could and would, according to the "inward light" bestowed upon him; and they would have appointed *no* Order of men at all, set apart by the Church to the office of "instructing the people out of the Scriptures," and therefore charged with the duty of "diligently *studying* the Scriptures, and whatever may tend to the right understanding of the same."*

The people, then, need instruction, and the Clergy are to give it. But it is instruction in "the whole counsel of God" as revealed in Scripture,—it is this, and no less than this, that the people have a right to demand and that the Clergy are bound to supply. Read over the Ordination Service for yourselves, and you will see that there hardly could be penned a more distinct protest against two dangerous extremes—the one, of supposing that the mass of mankind need no help from instructors for discovering their religion in the Bible; and the other, that the Clergy are to teach,—and that, on their own authority,—only so much of Scripture-doctrine as they may themselves chuse to impart, or anything else besides what is strictly *Scripture*-doctrine.

"But," it is sometimes asked, "does not Paul expressly speak of a 'wisdom' which he spoke only 'among the perfect,' (1 Cor. ii.) and of 'strong meat' that was unfit for 'babes' (Heb. iv. 11,) and suitable only for those who were of 'full age,' and who had 'their senses exercised to discern both good and evil'?—and what, after all, is this but a double-doctrine and system of reserve?"

Now, in answer to this, you will observe (1) that, whatever the Apostle does mean by "the wisdom" which he spoke among "the perfect"—or "the strong meat" which he did not give to "babes"—he certainly does *not* mean such essential doctrines as the Tractites would *reserve* from the great mass of Christians; since he fully propounds such doctrines as those, in the very Epistles from which these passages are cited. In the first Epistle to the Corinthians, for example, he expressly tells us that, among those who "were yet carnal," and "whom he had fed with milk," he "had determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and *Him crucified*," and that he "had delivered unto them *first of all*

that Christ *died for our sins* ;” and in the Epistle to the Hebrews, he insists largely upon the divinity of Christ, to those whom he, at the same time, declares to be such as “need milk and not strong meat.”

And (2) if you will consider the train of argument in the Epistle to the Hebrews carried out from the very place in which the Apostle expresses his intention of leaving “the principles of the doctrine of Christ,” and “going on to perfection,” (Heb. viii. 1, to chap. xi.) you will readily perceive that by “strong meat” he means the opening up of the relation between the Mosaic and christian Dispensations, and reasonings drawn from the types and prophecies of the Old Testament.

Such reasonings as these, it was not, in the nature of things, *possible* for any one to follow, or feel the force of, who was not previously grounded in the first principles of christian faith. Nor, again, would it have been wise for a religious teacher to draw men into such disquisitions, when they showed, by their conduct, that they still required *elementary* instruction, and were strangers to the spirit of Christianity. His time, in dealing with such carnal persons, would be better occupied in correcting their misapprehensions of first truths, and exhorting them to the *practice* of those duties which they already knew.

But in all this there is no *reserve* or *concealment* ; any more than in the conduct of a teacher of arithmetic, who, finding his scholar ignorant of the rules of simple division, or awkward in applying them, should chuse to ground him first thoroughly in that, before he set him to work sums in compound fractions.

In short, the Apostles did not *conceal* any of their doctrines from any *inquirer* ; but, in communicating them, they, of course, insisted first upon those which they thought most suitable to the wants or capacities of those whom they sought to instruct ; just as a teacher of any useful art or science makes no secret of it, and is ready to publish *any part* of his system to the world, though, when an ignorant person comes to him as a *learner*, he leads his scholar on step by step from easy things to difficult, until the whole is completely mastered.

Accordingly (3) you will further observe that this—the mastering of the whole of revealed truth—was the object which the Apostles proposed to *all* their disciples. They never thought of “carnal” persons and “babes,” as any *permanent* class in the

Church ; but they describe themselves as “ warning *every man*, and teaching *every man* in *all wisdom*, that they may present *every man perfect in Christ Jesus* ;” they exhort all to “ go on to perfection :” and they treat the state of those who, “ when, for the time, they ought to be *teachers*,” yet remain nothing better than “ babes,” as one of fearful danger, and aggravated sin.

In truth, the attempt of the Tractites to confound their “ double-doctrine” with that gradual teaching which every man of sense would chuse to practise in religious as well as in *every other* kind of knowledge, either springs from great confusion of thought, or is part of their “ economy” and “ phenakism,”—that is, what we should call, in plain English, deliberate *mystification*. “ For, if it were only ‘ gradual inculcation’ of religious truths that they were contending for, it would be to the private instruction of *individual* Christians their reasoning would have reference ; or, at least, of *sorted* classes of individuals on the same level of capacity for religious knowledge, so far as such a sorting could be found practicable. Whereas, what they are treating throughout as the great object of their pious alarm and horror, is the *publicity* given to the sublimest truths of the Gospel *in the pulpit*, and in ‘ the chief places of concourse ;’ where manifestly, from the mixed character of the congregations, composed of persons of every degree of spiritual capacity and moral worthiness, it would be impossible to deal out sacred knowledge by gradations exactly adapted to *each several* hearer.”*

It is, then, the *concealment*, not the gradual inculcation of doctrine, they contend for ; and accordingly they cite with approbation the rules of some of the “ fathers,” which forbid “ initiated” Christians to disclose the “ mysteries” of the faith to others, even when the meaning of them is importunately demanded ; and require men blindly to promise to believe all that they shall be taught, before they know what it is.

And, obviously with the same drift, they profanely allege in their own justification, the example of our Lord, who, on many occasions, spake unto *the multitude* in parables, and expounded those parables *only to his own disciples*. For, our Lord plainly *did*, in this instance, *conceal* the meaning of his parables from “ those who were without.” The parables were not a first and

* Dr. West's *Discourse on Reserve*. (Fellowes.)

elementary piece of instruction, and the explanation a higher and more difficult one, which could not be made intelligible without a knowledge of the first; but, on the contrary, what was spoken to the *multitude* was the thing hardest to be understood, and what was imparted to the *disciples* was the easiest; and the parable was unintelligible (except as a mere story) without a knowledge of the lesson to be drawn from it, while that lesson itself was quite intelligible without any knowledge of the parable.

But does our Saviour's example, then, afford any countenance to the Doctrine of Reserve?—Unquestionably not: and for these plain reasons. *He* was a divine infallible teacher, who first *proved* his divine infallible authority by miracles, and, upon the evidence of those miracles, called upon all who witnessed them to become his disciples; and he withheld the explanation of his parables only from those who, with such evidence before them, refused to become his disciples. *He* had a perfect right to lay down the terms upon which men were to receive any part of the Revelation which he came to make. And moreover, the terms upon which *He* saw fit to communicate this part of his Revelation were such as any one can perceive to be perfectly just and reasonable. *He concealed* the meaning of his parables only from those who, with the evidence of his miracles before them, refused to acknowledge Him as a "Teacher sent from God;" but to *all* who were willing to enrol themselves as his disciples, (though *He* must have been aware that some of these were, like Judas, "the children of perdition,") *He* freely imparted those explanations which *He* refused to the multitude.

Since, then, our Lord's conduct in this respect was the result of his being a divine infallible Teacher, who had already *proved* his claims to implicit faith by the evidence of miracle, it is manifest that those who do not and cannot *prove* themselves to be, like Him, infallible Instructors, are guilty of profane presumption in pretending to follow his example, when they *conceal* part of his doctrine, and publish only so much as they chuse themselves.

Nor, even if they *were* able to prove, as *He* did, a divine commission as infallible Teachers of the Church, would they be justified by his example in *reserving* any part of christian knowledge from *any Christian*. For, as we have seen, our Lord expounded his parables to *all his disciples* who sought such an explanation; while it is from christian men—from those who

are already the disciples of Jesus—that the Tractites would conceal the full explanation of some of the essential doctrines of his religion.

And further, as if to guard expressly against such an abuse of his example, and cut off all excuse from those who should dare to venture upon it, our Lord distinctly warned even the Apostles themselves, who *were* infallible Teachers, and able also to prove their commission by miracles, that such concealment as He practised was not to continue longer than the period of his own personal ministry—"WHAT I TELL YOU IN DARKNESS, THAT SPEAK YE IN LIGHT; AND WHAT YE HEAR IN THE EAR, THAT PREACH YE UPON THE HOUSE-TOPS." Matth. x. 27.

In truth, it is only the Great Teacher—God Himself—who can fitly determine what portion of religious knowledge shall, at any time, be made known to the world, or withheld from it. He was pleased (and the choice was doubtless a wise one, because it was *his* choice) gradually to make known, by inspired messengers, more and more of "the counsel of his will" to mankind, in several successive dispensations, until, at last, it was all fully published by the Apostles of his Son. But He never left it to fallible *man's* discretion to determine what should be disclosed, and what withheld: nor did He ever entrust man's ingenuity with the office of making further developments of his revelations. *He* knows what portion of his Truth is exactly suited for each generation of mankind;—and when, and how far, imperfect knowledge may be given without necessarily leading those who receive it into error. But with us it is otherwise. We are in the condition of ignorant men to whom some sage physician has imparted for the benefit of others a medicine curiously compounded according to rules of art with which we are unacquainted. Is it not madness, then, to say, that because the physician himself has formerly in his own practice, when dealing with other patients, sometimes omitted some of the ingredients of that medicine, therefore, *we* are justified in leaving out some part of the compound when we please, and yet still calling it his remedy? The medicine surely may be as much changed by omitting some ingredients, as by adding others.

And this consideration will help you to see the weakness of the most plausible excuse by which the Tractites seek to shelter themselves from the charge of teaching *different* religions to

different classes of men. "All we do teach"—they allege—"is agreeable to Scripture; only from some we withhold *a part*; and do not teach every one *all* that is contained in Scripture." As if this did not as effectually constitute two religions, as if they had added on something of their own!

For, by expunging or suppressing at pleasure, that which remains may become totally different from what the religion would have been if exhibited as a whole.*

It has been remarked that every statue existed in the block of marble from which it was carved; and that the Sculptor merely *discloses* it by removing the superfluous portions;—that the Medicean Venus, for instance, has not in it a single particle which did not originally exist exactly in the same relative position as now: the artist having *added* nothing, but merely *taken away*. Yet the statue is as widely different a thing from the original block, as if something *had* been added. What should we think of a man's pleading that such an image is not contemplated in the commandment against *making* an image, because it is not "*made*," as if it had been moulded, or cast, out of materials *brought together* for the purpose? Should any one scruple to worship a *moulded*, but not, a *sculptured* image, his scruple would not be more absurdly misplaced, than if he should hold himself bound, in his teaching, not to *add on* to Scripture anything he did *not* believe to be Scriptural, but allowed to suppress any portions of Gospel-truth at his pleasure, and to exhibit to his People the remaining portions, as the whole system of their religion.

Or, again, suppose that some one undertook to give you an abstract of a merchant's account-book, would you say that he had faithfully discharged his undertaking, if he put into your hands a document containing, indeed, nothing but what was in that book, but only *omitting* the debtor-side or the creditor-side, or setting down the shillings and pence, but not the pounds?

* A striking instance of this may be found in a work published a few years ago, termed *Elucidations of Dr. Hampden's Lectures*; in which, by picking out a sentence here, and a half-sentence there, an impression was produced of the general tendency of the work totally different from what the work itself warranted.

Those who thus garble and misrepresent a man's expressions, in order to bring on him abhorrence and persecution from credulous bigots, may be regarded as the genuine successors of those tyrannical emperors, who used to *dress up in the skins of wild beasts* their wretched victims the ancient Christians, and then set dogs at them to worry them to death.

"But has not," it may be asked—"our Saviour Himself commanded us to exercise some sort of reserve in preaching his religion?—Has He not forbidden us to 'give that which is holy to dogs, or cast pearls before swine,' and is this not recognising the very principle of the double-doctrine?"

Not at all—we reply. These words give no sanction whatever to the practice of giving so much and withholding so much, of Christ's doctrine, as we think proper. They only warn us against entering into any religious *discussions* at all with those who, like uncultivated savages, for example, are utterly unable to comprehend them; or who show manifestly by their conduct that they are not seeking for truth, but only for an occasion of insulting or persecuting its professors. This, in short, is a rule which might equally be given to the teachers of *any* doctrine or art or science in the world. We might warn in the same manner, the teacher of geometry, or political economy, or of medicine, not to waste his lessons upon those who were manifestly too stupid or too ignorant to derive any benefit from them, or upon those who plainly showed that they came not to learn, but to ridicule their instructor. Yet no one would be so foolish as to say that, in giving such advice, we were making medicine or geometry "mysterious sciences," or encouraging "reserve" in teaching them.

Indeed, it is plainly not on account of the effects likely to be produced upon the "swine and dogs," that our Saviour gives this admonition, but to guard against evil results to the teacher. We are not to "*throw away* our pearls upon swine" who cannot value them; because that would be lost labour; nor to give "holy things to dogs, *lest they turn again and rend us.*"

But do not understand us as saying that there are no secrets in religion. Doubtless there are. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." But this is not a peculiarity of religion.

There are secrets in every subject of knowledge: in poetry, for instance, and painting. A poet will publish his poem; still, though that poem may be read very extensively, it will remain, in proportion nearly to its excellence, a secret to the greater number of its readers. We mean that a really good poem would remain a secret to very many intelligent persons. They would all read the same words, and if intelligent persons were asked

what was the general drift and character of the poem in question, they would probably give nearly the same reply; but there are beauties and excellences in a fine poem which can only be discerned by those who have a poetical taste. The words may present the same outline of thought to all; but it will not excite the feelings in all which it would be sure to excite in a man of real poetical taste; such a man would discern beauties altogether hidden from others. So again in painting. The artist may exhibit his painting to all,—he is far from wishing to make a secret of it,—but he well knows that even of those who could accurately understand and explain the subject of his painting, few comparatively will feel its delicate perfections, or be able to appreciate either the labour or the success of the artist. For there is a pictorial taste requisite for that, and mere general intelligence is insufficient. Thus also in religion,—there is a devotional taste. Those who possess it will enter into religion with a feeling unconceived by others. Men of ordinary intelligence will understand the great outline of doctrine; but unless they possess devotional taste, it will be to them a mere outline,—a skeleton: very correct, perhaps, but wanting life and animation. The secret which gives it animation is “with them who fear the Lord,” and in proportion as they possess this quality.

We must distinguish, then, between two classes of secrets; one thing is a secret, because those who know it will not reveal it; another thing is a secret, because those to whom it is revealed cannot fully comprehend it. The latter class of secrets must always belong to religion, from the nature of the case; but this is not a peculiarity of religion.

There is, however, this difference between religion and the other kinds of knowledge we were speaking of. We cannot promise every one that he may attain a poetical taste, or a pictorial taste; but religion promises that each man may be brought into a devotional taste, more or less, in proportion as he himself earnestly desires it.

We have cautioned you, in this and in the three preceding Numbers, to distrust (1) all teachers, however high their pretensions to holiness, who would persuade you to believe what you happen to be told, without having or seeking any “reason for the hope that is in you;” and (2) all those, also, who justify and practise the principle of a double doctrine; teaching something

different from what they themselves inwardly believe, and then (to support one deceit by another) attempting, when censured for this, to colour over and explain away that very system of disguise and mystification which they had plainly avowed and notoriously put in practice. We were under a painful necessity, in the last Number, of exposing the way in which individuals of the leaders of the Tract party have acted on their principles of double-dealing.

We suspected that facts showing this were not known to several well-meaning supporters, and even opponents, of that party. And this suspicion has been confirmed by what we have since seen in an article of a leading Periodical, opposed to the Tractites, which speaks of them as persons "whose piety and sincerity it would be *blasphemous* to doubt;" as men in whom "we see 'the fruits of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, *faith*, meekness, temperance;'" as men who, *if placed in high authority in our church*, would, from "their *sincerity* and goodness, do more good than harm;" and whose "very opponents would be won to love them by the heavenly nature of their aims, and the manifest *simplicity* of their purpose!"* Now this implies great ignorance of *facts*; unless, indeed, we are to suppose, instead, ignorance of the first principles of common honesty. For how else could men be so described of whom many enjoyed, for many years before their openly joining the church of Rome, and others are still enjoying, the revenues of our church, while holding and teaching doctrines which they themselves admit to be utterly opposed to it, and professing much that they did not believe, because they considered it "NECESSARY FOR THEIR POSITION?"

Against these we solemnly warn you; and we shall next proceed to caution you against some other dangerous principles of the same school.

* *Edinburgh Review*, Jan. 1852; pp. 69, 70.

January, 1852.

No. XV.

"Refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness."

WE have been compelled to set forth very strongly, and at considerable length, in several of the foregoing Numbers, the dangerous tendency of some portions of the Tractite-system, which have been by some well-disposed persons much underrated.

There are several, for instance, who, though they disapprove of the principles and practices of that school, yet consider the danger to be merely that of reviving some troublesome and unedifying ceremonies and obsolete usages, that are unsuited to the present day. They look upon the matter as little more than what Milton called Laud's disputes with the Scotch, "a mere surplice-scuffle—an affair of quarter-caps and tippets."

Some again apprehend, beyond this, (and with very good reason,) the danger of a tendency towards Romanism; and that tendency is, indeed, by this time, so clearly manifested before men's eyes, that the wonder is that any persons should still remain who do not see it. But the greater part of those who do still continue blind to that tendency, are such as are themselves already, to a very great extent, under the influence of the system in question, and who are, therefore, reluctant to open their eyes to an unpleasant sight.

But as for the danger of *Infidelity*, as arising out of that system, *that* is by many, even quite unprejudiced observers, nearly overlooked. And yet it is a real and great danger.

There is most serious reason for apprehending that the leaders of the Tract-party will, in the end (without intending it), do the work of the avowed Infidel far more effectually than *he* could do it himself.

For instance, when avowed Infidels, such as Hume, place Christianity on the same footing with the pagan superstitions of the Hindoos, and declare that there is no evidence of its truth

that can satisfy a reasonable mind,—all these assertions will have but little weight with a man of sense. He will demand *proof* of such bold assumptions; and will not believe at once that there is no valid evidence for Christianity, merely because an *opponent* says so.

But it is quite otherwise when all this is said by persons professing to be themselves Christians,—nay, and to be men of such eminent holiness and learning, as to be authorized to look down on all who differ from them as grievously ignorant and erroneous. When such men as are praised even by their opponents* for “christian devotedness and self-sacrifice,” for “manifest sincerity,” and all the lovely “fruits of the Spirit,” for the “heavenliness of their aim, and the simplicity of their purpose,”—when such men represent true christian Faith as consisting in belief without any reason for it, and assure us that the more any one examines evidence, the more likely he will be to “end† by reposing in a self-sufficient and hazardous incredulity;”—mere assertions such as these are likely to have weight, when coming, not from avowed adversaries, but from professed friends.

And, again, attempts have been often made by Infidels to shake the evidence of the christian Miracles; which evidence, however, has been pronounced irresistibly strong, by a great majority of the most intelligent men who have really taken the pains to examine it. But it is a far more dangerous assault on those miracles to profess belief in them, and to maintain, at the same time, that there is *equal* reason to believe in the pretended miracles of the liquefying of St. Januarius’s blood, and a host of other childish legendary tales, which are supported by no evidence whatever.

When men, evidently not wanting in intelligence or in knowledge, profess *equally* to believe in *both* classes of miracles,—when they tell us that there is the same (or even stronger) external evidence for the idle stories of the saints, which, till lately, Roman-catholics themselves were more than half ashamed of,—as for the miracles of our blessed Lord and his Apostles, most men of common sense will interpret this to mean that they disbelieve and inwardly deride *both* alike.

And that they *may* be, consistently with their own avowed

* See the end of No. XIV.

† See No. XI. p. 137.

principles, secret unbelievers in what they outwardly profess, is evident from their own declarations. Whatever belief or unbelief may be at the bottom of their hearts, and kept secret from the rest of the world, they have let out at least this one most important secret—that they *have* a secret.

As far, therefore, as their system prevails, no one can have any reason for trusting that the very Teachers of religion placed over him, do inwardly believe much, or little, or anything at all, of the christian Religion. And such a doubt as this, combined with the declaration that christian Faith is not to be based on evidence, but that our religion is to be received, like that of the Pagans, without any reason at all,—this, manifestly, has a greater tendency to produce and to foster infidelity, than all that has ever been said, or can be said, by all the avowed anti-Christians in the world.

But there is (3rdly) another point worth noticing, as most dangerous to the christian Faith, in the teaching of that school we have been alluding to. It discourages the study of the Scriptures: not indeed openly and avowedly, but covertly and by implication. The diligent reading of the Scriptures may not, indeed, at once be given up; the effect may be delayed for years, or even for a whole generation; but, in the natural course of things, it will assuredly follow.

A tree which has been cut down will often retain sap enough in its trunk to throw out leaves as usual the next spring; but these apparent signs of life cannot continue long in a stem severed from the root; and, after a season or two, it will be a mere log, “without fruit, twice-dead, dried up and withered.” So, those who have been long under the influence of Tractite teaching will be brought gradually more and more to regard the study of Scripture as unnecessary and even dangerous to the generality of mankind.

For (1) this is implied by the system of “Reserve;” which teaches that the doctrine of the Atonement, the divinity of Christ, and other fundamental points of the Gospel, should be kept back from the mass of the people. Now these doctrines are (as was pointed out in the last Caution) so plainly set forth by Paul, that it is only by abstaining from the study of the Bible that it is *possible* to keep them out of sight. To those who have

the Scriptures in their hands, it will be found ~~that~~ the Apostles and Evangelists will still preach without reserve Christ crucified; and such preaching will still be a "sweet savour of Christ in them that believe and in them that perish." We may succeed in persuading others to keep back something of the counsel of God; but as long as we permit the Sacred Writers to bear *their* testimony, we shall have to meet them "witnessing both to small and great," and plainly setting the whole truth before all men, "whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear."*

And (2) by dwelling on the necessity of "blending Scripture with Tradition,"—a tradition which is only to be learnt from the study of some hundred huge volumes of the works of the Fathers and the Acts of Councils of the Church—the Tract-party do, in fact, supersede (for all but one in a million) all thought of paying any attention to the study of Scripture. The tradition which is to be blended with Scripture is described by its very admirers as "a *vast* system, not to be comprised in a few sentences, not to be embodied in one code or treatise, but consisting of a certain body of truth, permeating the Church like an atmosphere, irregular in its shape from its very profusion and exuberance; at times melting away into legend and fable; partly written, partly unwritten, partly the interpretation, partly the supplement of Scripture, partly preserved *in intellectual expressions*, partly latent in the spirit and temper of Christians; *poured to and fro in closets and upon the housetops*, in liturgies, in controversial works, in obscure fragments, in sermons."†

Now such a "vast system of teaching" as this, is plainly beyond the grasp of ordinary mortals; and, if so, will not men be apt to say:—"After all, Scripture is but a small part of the Rule of Faith; and for the rest, with which it is to be "*blended*," I *must* take the word of men more learned than myself. Now, if I must depend upon them for *that*, I may as well depend upon them for Scripture too."—For, if a man is to take a medicine composed of twenty ingredients, and nineteen of them

* It is now the fashion with a certain school to speak of the unrestrained reading of the Scriptures alone, without aid from the authoritative teaching of the Church, as likely to favour Romanism! We wish heartily that the Roman-catholic clergy could be induced to try the experiment.

† Newman's *Lectures on the Church*, p. 298. There are some sentences in this description quite beyond our reach, which we have accordingly marked with italics; but what remains is sufficient for our purpose.

he has no means of analyzing or bringing to any test, he will be likely to take the *whole* dose on the physician's word, without putting himself to the useless trouble of examining the twentieth.

Thus the laity will soon come to take their notions of what Christianity is, on the word of the Clergy; who, they will take it for granted, are learned men, deeply read in the writings of the Fathers; and the Clergy again, finding their statements thus readily received, will ease themselves of the trouble of examining the Fathers (or the Scriptures either) for themselves, and will be content with such representations of the teaching of both as may be recommended to them by "orthodox" authorities.

For, human teaching bears the same relation to Scripture, that what is called "paper currency" does to the precious metals. Banknotes and bills of exchange, though of no *intrinsic* value, are a very convenient circulating medium so long as they really *represent* gold or silver, and are payable in coin on the demand of the holder. But if these notes be made a legal tender, and are required to be received in payment, by the decree of the very government which issues them, and on its bare word, without being convertible into gold and silver, the result is, that those metals soon disappear, and men are cheated of their goods in exchange for worthless bits of paper.

Even so, as long as human teaching is really a *representative* of Scripture, and Scripture-proof is always ready to be given—*paid on demand*, as it were—of whatever is taught, then and then only, we are secured against the danger of having God's Word superseded by "doctrines which are commandments of men."

And the writings of the Fathers, you will observe, even though they had all the authority which the Tractites ascribe to them, could not possibly answer *this* purpose of putting a check upon erroneous human teaching; because they are not, like the Scriptures, accessible to the mass of mankind; nor could the laity "search the Fathers," as they may "search the Scriptures," to see whether "those things" which the clergy teach them, "are so." Offering, then, to the people, proof of doctrines from the works of the Fathers—works mostly untranslated, and far too voluminous for above one person in a hundred thousand to master—is something like offering to pay a large bill of exchange in farthings, which, you know, it would be intolerably troublesome to count or carry.

The effect of such teaching, then, with the mass of those who

receive it, will be, at first, that they will resign themselves entirely to the direction of their pastors.

But what will be the result with others, of a more inquiring mind, when they come to examine and reflect? They find, that of the works of the ancient christian writers a large portion is lost; some fragments, or reports of them by other writers, alone remaining;—that what *has* come down to us is so vast in amount that a life is not sufficient for the attentive study of even the chief parts of it;—that these writers are far from being agreed, on all points, with each other, or with themselves; and that learned men again are not agreed in the interpretation of *them*; and still less agreed as to the orthodoxy of each, and the degree of weight due to his judgment on several points; nor even agreed, by some centuries, as to the degree of *antiquity* that is to make the authority of each decisive, or more or less approaching to decisive; they find, in short, that everything pertaining to this appeal to the Fathers, is obscure, uncertain, disputable, and actually disputed, to such a degree, that even those who are not able to read the original authors, may yet be competent to perceive how unstable a foundation they furnish. And when they find all this to be so, its effect will be to drive the doubting into confirmed (though perhaps secret) infidelity; and to fill with doubts the most sincerely pious, if they are anxiously desirous of truth, and unhappily have sought it from such instructors.

The Tractites, indeed, have pursued, in this matter, much the same course as with respect to miracles. As they have done their utmost to make the Scripture-miracles incredible, by putting them on a level with the really incredible miracles of later times; so, they are taking the most effectual way of destroying the authority of the Scriptures themselves, by sinking them to the level of a mass of *human* works, and teaching men to listen for the voice of revelation “in Scripture and Tradition,”—for the voice of revelation (as one of them has expressed it) “wherever found, whether in Scripture or in *Antiquity*.”

And here, as in the former case, this conduct will do more to shake the authority of Scripture than all the attacks made by Infidels directly upon it, ever have done, or ever can do. For, Scripture is, in itself, invulnerable; and they who attack it, do but dash themselves to pieces against a rock. But it may easily be shown that “the Fathers of the Church” are mere human

teachers, who often deliver false, and sometimes even absurd things, as true doctrine. To encumber Christianity, therefore, with the defence of *their* errors and absurdities,—and make *that* essential to the safety of our religion,—is voluntarily to exchange an impregnable fortress for a position which cannot be maintained against the enemy. And when the real character of “Traditionary Revelation” is discovered, and when it is seen that intelligent persons, and professed friends of Christianity, place it on a level with Scripture Revelation,—demand practically the same submission to both,—and declare that both stand on the same ground, and that it is inconsistent conduct to receive the one and reject the other;—men will be apt to suspect that such persons must mean by “Revelation,” something quite different from what one would at first suppose, and that they look upon the Bible as in no other sense *inspired* than as all good and edifying books may be said to be.

And this impression will be much confirmed by observing in how large a way the leaders of the Tract party use the word “Inspiration.”

They speak, for example, of the ancient Greek version of the Old Testament, called the Septuagint, as *inspired*; and suggest that those who made it were supernaturally directed in some cases to give *wrong* translations of the Hebrew, so that “even in those places where their version swerved from the Hebrew Verity, there was a special *providential design* in such variation.”* They speak, also, of the Romish Missal, (or Liturgy of St. Peter, as they call it,) as an *inspired* piece; and yet they regard King Edward’s First English Prayer-book, in which that Liturgy was mutilated and altered, as composed under the special direction of the Holy Spirit; and so, of all the subsequent alterations of the Prayer-book, “ordered by the *same Spirit*, under whose control the first rites of Catholic worship were ordained.” And yet they call the Prayer-book, in its present state, a “heavenly and divine guide, dwelling among us.”† Yet, after all, it is manifest that these same persons think very meanly of this very book as a whole.

“The present Book of Common Prayer, which they pronounce divine, was altered from the first book of Edward, which they commend, beyond measure, as supereminently divine. They

* Tract LXXXIX. p. 20.

† Tract LXXXVI. p. 63.

acknowledge that there is a great falling off from this original, which itself was open to objections; that the changes introduced, far from being improvements, were greatly for the worse, and effected under evil influences. They acknowledge that Archbishop Cranmer,—whom they designate a time-server,—by whose authority the first book of Edward was altered, was overruled on the occasion by some violent Reformers from the continent by whom he was surrounded; men who, in their opposition to popery, went into extremes; who, in eradicating the tares, rooted up the wheat also; and who, yielding to their ultra-reform propensities, in the rejection of palpable errors and abuses opposed themselves to the true doctrine of the church, the sacrifice, and the sacraments. The result was, that the first inspired book of Edward, being altered by heretical influence, was stripped of a considerable portion of its orthodoxy, and, if not absolutely infected with, received an alarming dash of heretical pravity; which evil, thus increased, and still increasing in magnitude, remains to the present day. If such in reality be the nature of the Common Prayer-book; if it be the production of double-dealing, of truckling to error; if it be nothing better than the first reformed liturgy filched of its orthodoxy and inoculated with heresy; if it be, as the Tract writers acknowledge, a deterioration of divine worship and an encroachment on divine truth; to make it, notwithstanding, a work of inspiration, is a manifest burlesque on the operation of the divine Spirit; and is just as absurd as to maintain the inspiration of Robinson Crusoe, or the Fairy Tales.”*

* *Dissertation*, appended to DR. CROLY'S *Index to Tracts for the Times*, pp. 35, 36. The statements referred to by him are to be found throughout Tracts XXXI. and LXXXVI.; the latter of which is indeed, from first to last, little more than an exposition of the havoc made by our Reformers, at the instigation of Calvin, Bucer, Peter Martyr, &c., in the ancient Missal, with the assurance continually repeated, that, mysterious as it may seem, *all was for the best*. The mangled body of the Liturgy of St. Peter is paraded before the reader—each mutilation is shewn to have struck off some important christian privilege; but, then, it is added, we *deserved* to lose them. How? By not sufficiently *valuing* the system at which the Reformers aimed their blows! And this was called teaching men to reverence the Prayer-book,—much in the same way as Antony taught the Roman people to reverence those “honourable men” who murdered Cæsar—

Look! in this place ran Cassius' dagger through:
See what a rent the envious Casca made:
Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabbed;
And, as he plucked his cursed steel away,
Mark how the blood of Cæsar followed it.
* * * * *

But they are *wise and honourable* men,
And will, no doubt, with reasons answer you.

Robinson Crusoe, or the Arabian Nights, might, with a little ingenuity, be easily turned into allegories about religion; and then a person who did not scruple using words in "a peculiar sense" might speak of them as "divinely inspired,"—meaning that they *might be made* to afford religious instruction, and were *providentially* so written as to be capable of that particular application, though it was never intended by the writers. And people will be apt to suspect that those who speak of "the whole Bible" as "one great parable," not to be expounded by the same rules of criticism as other books, but mystically and allegorically, even in the plainest narratives and arguments; and as having as many meanings as a "pious" fancy can find for its words;—do in reality entertain at bottom much the same opinion of Scripture as of Robinson Crusoe or the Arabian Nights. For any book at all may be made to yield a profitable meaning, if we ourselves first *put that meaning* into it, and chuse to consider it as "a great parable" of something that we have not learned from it, but have known already by some other means.

IV. The earnestness again with which these writers deprecate "private judgment"* has a similar tendency.

For, waiving all considerations as to the *right*, and as to the *duty*, of private judgment, it must be evident to all who are not incapable of reasoning, that there is an unavoidable *necessity* of private judgment on any subject wherein we *take any serious interest*. The responsibility is one which, however unfit we may deem ourselves to bear it, we cannot possibly get rid of. The fallacy which often misleads men in this matter, is, that we *can* refrain from exercising private judgment on *this or that particular* point, by *transferring* our judgment to some *other* point. For instance, a man distrusting his own knowledge of Medicine, may refrain from exercising any judgment as to the remedies he should use, and may put himself wholly in the hands of a physician: that is, he *judges* that a physician is needful, and that such and such a practitioner is worthy of confidence. Or, supposing he distrusts his own judgment on *this* point also, then, he consults some friend whom he *judges* to be trustworthy, as to what physician he shall employ. In one way, or else in another, he *cannot but* exercise private judgment. And it is the

* On this point we have already treated in Caution No. II., pp. 21, 22.

same in all matters ; except those in which we *take no interest*, and which do not occupy our thoughts. In most of the causes, for instance, that are tried in a court of justice, we do not trouble ourselves to exercise any judgment, simply because we do not know or care enough about either plaintiff or defendant to be interested in the decision.

When, then, a man is told by those he looks up to as the ablest Divines, that he ought not to exercise private judgment in religious matters, he will soon perceive, if he possess even a moderate share of intelligence, that this precept can be complied with only in one way ; by *withdrawing his attention* as much as possible from the whole subject, except as far as regards outward forms and observances, and sedulously refraining from asking of himself the questions, what the christian religion is, and what truth there is in it. And this state of mind is closely allied to, and immediately leads to, that which it has been our present object to guard against.

V. And this tendency in the Tractite-teaching to make Christianity assume the form of a religion of mere outward Rites and Observances, discloses itself still more plainly, when we consider the stress which that party lay upon what they call “ the Apostolical succession ” of the christian Ministry.

The “ Apostolical succession ” of the christian Ministry has been, indeed, very properly insisted upon by many of our Divines, who only meant thereby the existence of *such an Order of men as christian Ministers* continuously from the times of the Apostles. And the existence of an Apostolical succession (in this sense) is perhaps as complete a moral certainty as any historical fact can be ; because (independently of the various incidental notices by historians, of such a class of persons) it is plain that if, at the present day, or a century ago, or ten centuries ago, a number of men had appeared in the world, professing (as our Clergy do now) to hold a recognised office in a christian Church, to which they had been regularly appointed as successors to others, whose predecessors, in like manner, had held the same, and so on, from the times of the Apostles,—if such a pretence had been put forth by a set of men assuming an office which no one had ever heard of before,—it is plain that they would at once have been refuted and exposed. And as this will apply equally to each

successive generation of christian Ministers, till we come up to the time when the institution was confessedly new,—that is, to the time when christian Ministers were appointed by the Apostles, who professed themselves eye-witnesses of the Resurrection,—we have, in the christian Ministry (as Leslie has remarked) a standing Monument of the fact of that event's having been proclaimed immediately after the time when it was said to have occurred. This therefore is fairly brought forward as an evidence of its truth.

But the "Apostolic succession" which the Tractites insist upon—and with which they often artfully confound that just explained—is really a very different thing.* What they require for the lawful administration of the sacraments is, that each priest should be ordained by some bishop, who was himself consecrated by some other bishop that derives his Episcopal orders transmitted in unbroken succession by a line of bishops like himself, the first of whom was ordained by an Apostle.

Now that there *were* always from the Apostles' times men acting in the capacity of Christian Bishops in particular places—as Antioch, for example, or Rome—is a thing not very difficult of proof; because such matters are things of public notoriety, and naturally find a place in history: But that each one of these prelates, during the eighteen centuries that have since elapsed, had been regularly baptized, and then ordained first Deacon, then Priest, and then Bishop, it is by no means so easy to make out; since it is vain to look after records of such things in very ancient times; while yet any one flaw in the succession would (on the Tractite theory) be enough to break the whole chain.

There is not a Minister in all Christendom who is able to trace up with any approach to certainty his own spiritual pedigree. The sacramental virtue (for such it is that is implied—whether the term be used or not—in the principle we have been

* It is really quite wonderful to what a degree these two very different things are confounded together in the minds of some well-meaning, and (otherwise) sensible men. We have known, for instance, a clergyman who was not himself (consciously at least) one of the Tract-party, express the greatest alarm and indignation at our denial, in this very Number, of the "doctrine of apostolical succession;" which, he said, he considered to be "as well-established as *any historical fact* can be." Now it is quite evident he must have been confounding together the very things which we are here distinguishing, and which one would think are so easily to be distinguished. For he could not possibly have meant that *his own individual* succession from the Apostles was an *established historical fact*. And the apostolical succession of a *christian Ministry*, generally, we are expressly maintaining.

speaking of) dependent on the imposition of hands, with a due observance of apostolical usages, by a Bishop, himself duly consecrated, after having been in like manner baptized into the Church, and ordained Deacon and Priest,—this sacramental virtue, if a single link of the chain be faulty, must, on the above principles, be utterly nullified ever after, in respect of all the links that hang on that one. For if a bishop has not been duly consecrated, or had not been, previously, rightly ordained, his ordinations are null; and so are the ministrations of those ordained by him; and *their* ordination of others; (supposing any of the persons ordained by him to attain to the episcopal office); and so on, without end. The poisonous taint of informality, if it once creep in undetected, will spread the infection of nullity to an indefinite and irremediable extent.

And who can undertake to pronounce that during that long period usually designated as the dark Ages, no such taint ever was introduced? Irregularities could not have been wholly excluded without a perpetual miracle; and that no such miraculous interference existed, we have even historical proof. Amidst the numerous corruptions of doctrine and of practice, and gross superstitions, that crept in, during those ages, we find recorded descriptions not only of the profound ignorance, and profligacy of life, of many of the clergy, but also of the grossest irregularities in respect of discipline and form. We read of bishops consecrated when mere children;—of men officiating who barely knew their letters;—of prelates expelled, and others put into their places, by violence;—of illiterate and profligate laymen, and habitual drunkards, admitted to Holy Orders; and in short, of the prevalence of every kind of disorder, and reckless disregard of the decency which the Apostle enjoins. It is inconceivable that any one even moderately acquainted with history, can feel a certainty, or any approach to certainty, that, amidst all this confusion and corruption, every requisite form was, in every instance, strictly adhered to, by men, many of them openly profane and secular, and unrestrained by public opinion, through the gross ignorance of the population among which they lived; and that no one not duly consecrated or ordained was admitted to sacred offices.

Even in later and more civilized and enlightened times, the

probability of an irregularity, though very greatly diminished, is yet diminished only, and not absolutely destroyed. Even in the memory of persons living, there existed a bishop concerning whom there was so much mystery and uncertainty prevailing as to when, where, and by whom, he had been ordained, that doubts existed in the mind of some persons, whether he had ever been ordained at all. We do not say that there was good ground for the suspicion:—but the existence, actual, or even possible, of such a suspicion,—the actual, or even conceivable concurrence of circumstances such as to manifest the *possibility* of such an irregularity—is sufficient with a view to the present argument.

Now, let any one proceed on the hypothesis that there are, suppose, a hundred links connecting any particular minister with the Apostles; and let him even suppose that not above half of this number pass through such periods as admit of any possible irregularity; and then, placing at the lowest estimate the probability of defectiveness in respect of each of the remaining fifty, taken separately, let him consider what amount of probability will result from the *multiplying* of the whole together. The ultimate consequence must be, that any one who sincerely believes that his claim to the benefits of the Gospel-covenant depends on his *own minister's claim* to the supposed sacramental virtue of true ordination, and this again, on perfect Apostolical Succession as above described, must be involved, in proportion as he reads and inquires, and reflects, and reasons on the subject, in the most distressing doubt and perplexity.

It is no wonder, therefore, that so many of the advocates of this theory studiously disparage reasoning, deprecate all exercise of the mind in reflection, decry appeals to evidence, and lament that even the power of reading, should be imparted to the people. It is not without cause that they dread and lament “an age of too much light,” and wish to involve religion in “a solemn and awful gloom.” It is not without cause that, having removed the Christian's confidence from a rock, to base it on sand, they forbid all prying curiosity to examine their foundation.

And, if it be said that, notwithstanding all the risks which the Apostolical succession must have run, in passing through so many generations, its purity was nevertheless maintained by a

perpetual miracle, such a reply will not ultimately much mend the matter ; since those who believe, and those who disbelieve that plea, will both eventually be apt to come to, practically, the same conclusion, that Christianity—if this be a true representation of it—is MAINLY A SYSTEM OF OUTWARD ORDINANCES ; and that what some regard as its essentials, a christian faith, and a christian heart, are comparatively a small part of it.

On this we shall enlarge somewhat further in the next Caution.

No. XVI.

WE adverted in the last Caution to the mistake of confounding together two, in reality quite different, things: the Apostolical succession of a christian Ministry *generally*, and the Apostolical descent in an unbroken line of this or that individual Minister. But we must recal your attention to this point, because this important distinction is likely to escape the notice of those who are hasty and careless in reflection, and is skilfully kept out of sight by artful sophists.

The case, you will observe, stands thus. We are told that the divine Grace of the christian Sacraments, and the efficacy of all a Clergyman's ministrations, depend on his having been ordained by a Bishop, who was himself ordained and consecrated by a person, who, in turn, derived his Orders from one who had again derived his, through a vast number of intermediate links, from the Apostles; and that if this unbroken chain be defective (as it must be, if any one link of it be wanting), all the supposed Sacraments ministered, and all the acts of spiritual authority done by such a supposed Minister, are null and void.

Now, when a man is taught this, he will naturally reflect that he cannot have any reasonable assurance of being even a baptized Christian, unless he can have *proof* that the Ministers under whom he has been placed really do possess this Apostolical succession. And, when he asks for such proofs, he is answered by being told that the "Apostles ordained elders in every city;" and that there is every reason to believe (which is quite true) that these ordained others, and those again others, and so on down to the present day; and that there always have been christian Ministers in every Church from the Apostles' times, downwards.

This would be very satisfactory *if* proof could be added that no instance of irregularity in this transmission of Orders could ever have taken place in any individual instance; or that the

particular Minister about whom he is anxiously inquiring, can fully establish, in his own case, an unbroken chain.

But, in default of such proof, our unhappy inquirer must be content with the assurance that it is *very probable* his own Minister is a regular and real one; and that, therefore, those placed under his ministry are *most likely* members of the Church of Christ; and are *probably* partaking of real Sacraments, and not invalid and empty appearances! But of all this they can have no reasonable *certainty*.

And yet nothing short of such certainty ever satisfies reasonable men, in any matter that they have really at heart. If, for example, you were to go into a chemist's shop for some important medicine, on which might turn the life or death of some dear friend, you would not be satisfied at being told that the bottle he presented to you was one out of fifty, all of which, *perhaps*,—or, at least, forty-eight or forty-nine of them,—contained the right medicine; though it certainly was possible the fiftieth might contain poison; but that he *hoped* you had got one of the right bottles.

Or, again, if you should claim a share in some property, alleging that the former owner of that property undoubtedly *had* several relatives, and that it was highly probable you were one of them, you well know that your claim would be laughed to scorn, unless you could bring proof of *your own* relationship.

In order, then, to allay the distressing and perplexing doubts which must be produced in every thoughtful mind by the doctrine we have been speaking of, the maintainers of it endeavour to escape the difficulty by boldly assuming that the Apostolical succession, *at least in the church to which they themselves happen to belong*, has been, and will ever be, preserved, by a continual miracle, from being broken by any irregularity, even in half-barbarian ages and regions, full of ignorance and disorder of all kinds.

But as for *christian doctrine and practice*, in these, it is notorious what gross and wide-spread corruptions have arisen in Christendom, beginning even in the very Apostolic age. Against *these* corruptions, it is manifest, no such supernatural safeguard was provided. The "Apostolical succession" of right faith and right conduct was *not* secured by any miraculous interference.

Our *own* Orders, for example, are supposed to have been pre-

served pure in England through centuries, when gross superstition and immorality prevailed generally through the Church in this Country. And this supposition is not made, you will observe, on the ground that it can be shown to have been at all unlikely, in the natural course of things, that the chain of our succession should have been broken. Far otherwise. It is acknowledged that history reveals the fact that serious irregularities did often occur; since it tells us of the steps taken to remedy them; and it is conceded, that, if we looked only to natural causes, similar irregularities may have occurred in cases where they were never detected, or where, if detected, it was too late, or too troublesome to correct them. But it is said that all such evils *must* have been guarded against, because, otherwise, the people would have been left without a Priesthood, and consequently without the ordinary means of grace. Yet all the while, it is granted, that no miracle was wrought to secure to the people pure moral or doctrinal teaching. A miraculous interposition secured the integrity of what was external in religion, but no miraculous interposition was vouchsafed for the preservation of the rest!

And further, according to this supposition, the Orders of a corrupt and corrupting Clergy were, in those ages, preserved pure, by a special miracle, for the exclusive benefit of such of the people as would receive the erroneous teaching and submit to the exorbitant demands of that corrupt and corrupting priesthood.* For if, in those Ages, any number of the laity, however large, had perceived the falsity of the doctrines taught by the Clergy, and the unlawfulness of complying with their injunctions, such a Body of mere laymen would have been (upon the supposition of the Tractites) reduced to the alternative either of professing what they did not believe, and practising what they knew to be wrong, or of foregoing the ordinary means of grace—those sacraments which (we are told) can only be dispensed by a “regular” Ministry—and putting themselves out of the pale of the visible Church. And, accordingly, thorough-going Tractites do not only admit, but earnestly contend, that multitudes of those who in former times renounced the communion of the

* And this difficulty presses not those only who acknowledge that Romanist teaching is corrupt, but those also who would hold it to be correct; as will appear manifest from considering the case of the laity in the *Greek Church*, and under the prevalence of *Arianism* in Spain.

Church of Rome rather than join in its errors, and whole nations of foreign Protestants at the present day, who have, from like causes, lost the "Apostolical succession," did, by thus separating from a corrupt Church and its Priesthood, deprive themselves of the ordinary means of grace.

Indeed, it is manifest that, if a peculiar Order of men, like the Clergy, are, in this way, absolutely essential to the salvation of the people, and if that Order has the exclusive right of perpetuating its own succession by admitting persons into its ranks, and deciding upon its own privileges, such an Order has practically the power, if the members of it only hold together, of ruling absolutely all who recognise its authority. And if Christ has made a Clergy so constituted thus essential to his Church, while at the same time He has not guaranteed that this Clergy shall never teach men gross errors and promulgate most unrighteous laws, then, plainly, He has made *external* rites, and the outward frame of the Church, the *essentials* of his religion, and purity of Faith and Morals only accidental to it.

It is plain, indeed, that, upon the Tractite principle, no provision at all is made for the preservation of *Truth* among the laity, when once the Clergy have gone wrong. As for endeavouring to guard themselves against errors and corruptions by a devout and diligent study of Scripture, and careful exercise of their own reason thereon, this (we have seen) is prohibited. Men are not (according to that system) to exercise any private judgment upon the subject, but are bound to acquiesce in whatever their legitimate pastors may tell them.

Now, if the legitimate Pastors always taught men correctly, then, a standing miracle to maintain a line of legitimate Pastors always in the Church, would really be a provision for the maintenance of Truth; but, if the Pastors were for centuries together teaching gross error, then, a miraculous provision for maintaining such a Body of men as the *legitimate* Teachers, looks dangerously like a provision for the inculcation and establishment of error.

The conclusion, therefore, (as we remarked in the last Caution,) cannot but force itself on every intelligent mind, that Christianity—if this be a true representation of it—is mainly *a system of outward ordinances*; and that what some regard as its essentials, a christian faith and a christian heart, are comparatively a small part of it. Those who, in consequence, reject the religion,

as on a level with the Brahminical superstitions, and those who receive it as thus represented, will alike have been alienated from true Christianity.

Nor will a man, even thus, escape from endless perplexities about the validity of those very Sacraments in which he supposes the only essential part of the christian Religion to consist. For, the Tractites themselves will not say that the true Apostolical succession has been miraculously kept pure and entire in *every* particular Church which *pretends* to possess it. On the contrary, some of them profess grave doubts of the validity of the Swedish and (still more) of the Moravian Orders; though both the Swedish and Moravian Churches *claim* an Apostolical succession. Notwithstanding, then, a miraculous interference to maintain the succession *somewhere* in the Church, it may be (in their view) a very nice and difficult matter to determine whether the line has been kept unbroken in *any given* Church. The supposed miraculous interference, therefore, does not, after all, exclude the possibility of grounds for distressing anxiety on the part of particular individuals lest *they* should be excluded from the ordinary means of grace, and lest the Sacraments, from which they look for salvation, should be absolutely null and void.

And when men's anxiety has once been aroused upon such a question, it is plain that they will have to determine it after all by their private judgment. Their Clergy manifestly cannot determine *this* question for them, since it is one upon the decision of which depends their own claim to be considered as Clergy at all. Nor again, until this question is determined, can the people reasonably repose an absolute faith in the teaching of the men who claim to be their Pastors, with respect to any part of Christianity whatsoever.

Here then, you see, that while the Tractites are ever deprecating all inquiries into the evidences of Christianity, and all exercise of private judgment upon matters of doctrine, as leading to scepticism and irreligion, they do in reality (by their principle of the necessity of an "Apostolical succession") force men into far more difficult inquiries, and engage private judgment upon a subject which is (in their view) of much greater practical importance, and certainly much greater perplexity, than any point of doctrine.

Some, however, escape these doubts and perplexities by not *reflecting* on the degree of uncertainty which must (on such a theory of Apostolical succession) attach to the Orders of every clergyman in Christendom, and consequently to the validity of the Sacraments administered by him. But though ignorance and inattention may bring temporary peace, it cannot bring safety; and, therefore, it is right that such persons should be made to see the insecurity of their position upon their own theory.

Let a man then consider his own case. The question is—Am I a member of the visible Church, and in the enjoyment of the ordinary means of grace? Now this, upon the Tractite view, involves these two questions—Was the person by whom I was baptized a regular Minister? and is the person from whom I receive the Holy Communion, &c., a regular Minister?

Suppose that I am settled under a different Pastor from him who baptized me—here is my salvation made to depend upon the validity of the Orders of two other persons, into whose history it may be very difficult for me to inquire.

But this, at least, I know; that the validity of the Orders of each of these depends, in its turn, upon the validity of the Orders of those by whom they were baptized and ordained; and that consequently my security of having the means of salvation depends upon the validity of the Orders of six or *seven* more persons, at almost the first step.

Advance a step further, and take the three Bishops by whom the Ministers on whom I depend were ordained: for three there probably were; since the person who baptized me was at least *once* ordained; and the person from whom I receive the Communion, Absolution, &c., must have been *twice* ordained. Take, then, these three Bishops, and you will perceive that, at the very next remove, there are twelve new links required in the chain. For each of these Bishops should have been (1) baptized, made (2) a Deacon, (3) a Priest, and (4) a Bishop, regularly, to enable him to confer valid Orders upon the persons from whom I derive my title to salvation. We have here, then, nineteen links, a failure in any one of which will put me out of the pale of the visible Church, and deprive me of the ordinary means of grace.

Carry back the same inquiry a few steps further, and you will find the links multiplying upon you so fast, that it will be

troublesome to count them; and then consider what a vast number of such links will be required to complete the chain *through eighteen centuries* from the time of the Apostles, and what will be the result of multiplying together the probabilities of each step.

Suppose, for example, that it is four chances in five that B is the rightful successor of A, we express this by saying that the probability is four-fifths. Now, suppose again the probability that C is successor of B to be likewise four-fifths, and so likewise that D is successor of C, and again E of D. Then the probability that E is successor of A will be four-fifths of four-fifths of four-fifths of four-fifths—that is something less than *one-third*.

Now the chance of your possessing the means of salvation is (upon the Tractite theory) just the chance of there having been no failure of any single link in this enormous chain from the Apostles' times to ours. The chance against your possessing the means of salvation is the chance of such a failure having *once* occurred.

And is it thus that the Christian is to "give diligence" to make his calling and election *sure*? Is it thus that he is to "run not as *uncertainly*" and to draw near to God in *full assurance* of faith? And did the Redeemer come upon Earth, and die on the Cross, and rise again, to obtain for his followers this doubtful hope of salvation?—doubtful, not, through any uncertainty as to *their* faithfulness, but from causes over which they have no control?

When men have been startled by such considerations as these, they are willing to calm their minds again by the reflection that, though we are bound to regard as wholly void and worthless the ministrations of any one who is not (in their sense) a rightful successor of the Apostles, and though it is impossible in the case of *each individual* Minister to ascertain this with perfect certainty, still, any one who receives the rites of the Church at the hands of those whom he *believes*, according to the *very best judgment* and most *perfect knowledge within his reach*, to possess the requisite qualifications, will have *done his best*; and may, on that ground, hope for acceptance before his divine Judge; trusting that he shall suffer no loss through any mistake that was wholly unavoidable.

And certainly, if any one should, after having used all possible care and precaution, administer to a sick man a poisonous dose, he would—although the patient would die, not the less—be acquitted of all moral blame. And so also, if he were transmitting to some distant Country a cargo of Bibles, which were changed, through the fraud or negligence of an agent, for a parcel of worthless or noxious books, though the people receiving them would lose the edification designed, one may hope that the divine goodness would accept, in respect of the sender, the will for the deed.

But then, it should be remembered that if *no more* is required of a man than to do his utmost, he is also required to do *no less*. One who should administer a medicine *without* due care, even though it should chance to be the right one, would be no less morally responsible than if the same want of care had happened to produce a fatal result.

Whoever therefore puts in the plea of having *done his best* to secure the ministrations of one possessing the above qualification, ought, consistently with his own principle, to be (conditionally) *re-baptized, re-ordained, re-consecrated, &c.*, again and again, as often as he has access to any fresh Ministers: just as any one, who is earnestly bent on conveying some most important intelligence to a friend in a remote part of the world, will write by *every* ship likely to touch there, in order to make sure of leaving nothing undone towards effecting his object.

We have here therefore a ready *test*, for judging whether a person who professes the above principle, and puts in the above plea, is really sincere, and heartily and practically in earnest, in his profession.

It has been alleged, for instance, that the chances of any interruption of Apostolical-Succession are greatly diminished by the presence of *three* Bishops, instead of only one, at the Consecration of a new one. And this is admitted; but then it must also be admitted that the risk, how much soever *lessened*, is not, nor ever can be, *annihilated*: and moreover that it would be still *further*, and further, diminished by the presence of *four*, of five, and of any greater number, to an unlimited extent. And it is also evident that however minute the chance may ultimately be of any *actual* mistake, still, this makes no difference as to the responsibility of those who put in the plea, not, of actual

avoidance of mistake, but, of having done *their very utmost* to guard against it.

As for those who hold that the presence of three or more Bishops is an appointment merely for the sake of decent and solemn publicity, *they* indeed need suffer no anxious doubts as to the validity of any public act, performed according to the rules laid down in the Church. But one who regards the presence of the three Bishops as constituting some degree of *safeguard* against the *danger of nullity* that might result from some by-gone informality, must admit the *existence* of such danger; and also, that it would be still further diminished (though never completely done away) by resorting to the ministration of fresh and fresh Bishops without limit. And this he clearly *is* bound to resort to, if he sincerely rests his justification, not, on the extreme smallness and insignificance of the risk, but, on his having *left nothing undone* to provide against it.

Such precautions as these we really do take in matters of this world, where we feel that any deep interest is at stake. If you doubt whether your child has taken the cow-pock, you have him vaccinated again and again. If a friend is missing, you send out as many messengers as you can, in *every* direction in which it is possible that he may have strayed.

Now, if those who urge the above plea do not act thus also in the case of the Sacraments, must it not be either because they do not really value the grace which they suppose the Sacraments to convey, or because they only half-believe their own theory of Apostolical succession—or finally, make this insincere plea merely as an excuse for neglecting to do what is distasteful to them?

"Well, but," it is said, "putting such cases as this of continued re-baptizations, and re-ordinations, &c., and then illustrating their necessity by talking about ship-letters and vaccination, is turning a grave subject into a jest. It is appealing to ridicule; and we confess that we cannot *refute* ridicule. We can only *despise* it."

But if the consequences which do justly follow from these men's principles be really *ridiculous*, is that *our* fault? Are we to avoid drawing them, because that may raise a laugh at their expense? If so, the more directly absurd anything is, the more

secure is it from refutation ; since it is impossible to refute such things without placing them in a ludicrous point of view. And, indeed, the more gravely you handle them, the more ludicrous they are apt to appear ; only, if you are too grave upon such occasions, people will be apt to laugh both at you and your subject.

If it be ridiculous to suppose that it is a man's duty to spend his whole life in anxious and minute care about the external rites of religion, that is really saying that the Tractite-theory, of which such anxiety would be the legitimate consequence, is, itself, ridiculous—not, observe, that it *may be* so stated as to appear ridiculous, but that it *cannot* be fairly stated *without* being seen to be ridiculous. And, if so, are not those who would seek to shelter it from exposure, by stifling the true statement of it, much more to blame than those who describe it as it really is, although at the risk of making men smile at its absurdity ?

In anything that we have said in this, or in the last Caution, upon the present subject, we have not (you will perceive) been denying the necessity of a regular Ministry in general, or depreciating such an episcopal Ministry as we happily enjoy in particular. We have only been contending against such blind attempts to raise their importance in the eyes of the ignorant, as must in the end (if received as the only possible account of their value) make them appear utterly contemptible in the eyes of all reflecting persons.

We are not denying that the three Orders of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, were instituted by the Apostles in the original platform of the Church ; nor yet do we dispute the propriety of adhering to the original platform of the Church, so far as it can be certainly discovered, and so far as it is *not manifestly unsuited to the altered circumstances of modern times*.

What we contend against is, an attempt to make adherence to certain strict rules of Ecclesiastical government an essential condition of Salvation, without any express declaration on the part of Christ or his Apostles imposing such a condition. We take, in short, precisely the position of the great Reformers of our Church.

They, in the Preface to the Ordination-Services, profess a high

respect for the three Orders of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, and a strong sense of the propriety of retaining them. But upon what do they ground that judgment? Is it upon the *necessity* of those Orders to men's salvation? Manifestly not; for if that had been their meaning, they would, no doubt, have, in such a case, appealed to Scripture alone as their warrant; since it is from *Scripture alone*,—as they teach us in Article VI.—that all things necessary to Salvation are to be proved. But in this case they do *not* appeal to Scripture alone. "It is evident," they say, "unto all men diligently reading the Holy Scriptures, *and ancient authors*, that from the Apostles' time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church; Bishops, Priests, and Deacons." It is of the *expediency* of maintaining unbroken an ancient and general usage they were speaking; not, of the necessity of complying with a divine command.

Some, indeed, there are, who profess themselves loyal children of our Church, and yet, while they acknowledge that the "Apostolical succession" cannot be proved from Scripture alone, yet think themselves justified in maintaining that it is necessary to Salvation. "All *Doctrines*, indeed," they say, "must be traced to Scripture, before they can be looked on as divinely revealed; but necessary *rites and outward visible institutions* might be safely intrusted to tradition; and, therefore, in the case of these, we may reasonably take tradition as our guide."

But the Article, as you see, makes no such distinction. "Holy Scripture," it says, "containeth *all things* necessary to Salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an Article of Faith, *or be thought requisite or necessary to Salvation*."

Nor, indeed, is the distinction, however just, available in the present case. Since the question now is, not whether tradition may not prove *the fact* of the Apostolic origin of certain outward institutions as we now have them, but whether it can prove the *doctrine* of their necessity to Salvation. And these are two widely different things. Grant it to be highly improbable that men should ever have been persuaded that a rite or institution which notoriously began in their own times had been in existence among them and their ancestors from time immemorial, and that this is a reason for believing that outward institutions

generally reputed Apostolic, really are so,—grant all this, if you please, for the present; yet will it not remain quite possible that outward institutions, which were not originally thought necessary, may, after a while, come to have an excessive sanctity and importance attributed to them, and thus quite alter their character in men's minds, while their form in men's eyes remains the same?

But, indeed, the security of Tradition as a means of purely conveying Apostolic rites and institutions is grossly exaggerated by these persons.

It is true that the particular generation of men amongst whom a new Rite or institution is introduced, cannot be brought, against the evidence of their senses, to believe that it is an old one always practised and known by themselves and their forefathers. But it may be introduced among *them* as a *new* thing; and then, after some succeeding generations have passed away, and when the records of its introduction have been lost or forgotten, it may come to be regarded as a primitive rite or institution. Thus, the peasantry are often found to ascribe, in local tradition, a far higher antiquity to old ruins and monuments than really belongs to them; not because, when those buildings were first erected, the neighbours were persuaded that they had always stood there, but because the true date of their erection was afterwards forgotten, and a false one substituted for it by vague guesses and conjecture.

And further, not only may totally new institutions be in this way introduced, but the old institutions run continual risks of being so gradually *altered*, from time to time, as to become, in the end, very different from what they were at first, though still retaining the old names. Yet as long as the names are kept the same, men are apt to fancy that the things remain unaltered. But a little reflection will put you on your guard against so weak a prejudice. We have, indeed, in one sense, always had Aldermen in England, since the old Saxon time. But you need not be told that an alderman of the nineteenth century is a very different officer from an alderman in King Alfred's days.

So, a Bishop in the primitive Ages, was the chief Minister of a particular Church, and had no ecclesiastical superior on earth; and it was even held then as an undisputed maxim that there could not be in any one Church more than one Bishop. And

a Bishop in these times was not the sole spiritual governor of the Diocese over which he was placed; but he presided over a Council of Elders, who, in concert with him, managed the affairs of the Diocese.

But with us, you know, a Church is composed of many Bishopricks; and over Bishops are set Arch-bishops; and over them again, in some countries, Patriarchs. And within a particular Diocese, the Bishop is the sole governor; nor need he consult the Presbyters in the management of Church affairs unless he chuse.

A Deacon, again, in early times, was an officer who had charge of the Church-money, and who was intrusted with the task of dispensing it to the poor. But with us, you know, those parts of what was the Deacon's office are generally devolved upon others.

Though the old names, therefore, are still retained, yet our Bishops and Deacons differ in many respects from the Bishops and Deacons of the primitive Ages.

Now we are not saying that such changes as these may not have been advisable, or unavoidable, under the altered circumstances of the Church. We are only saying that such changes have undeniably taken place. And, therefore, when men come to see that the very persons who contend that the primitive institutions were unalterably bound upon the Church as necessary to salvation, do themselves maintain institutions very different, and very different by their own confession, from the primitive, it is to be apprehended that they will soon begin to doubt entirely the trustworthiness of such Teachers. And when men have been taught that Institutions necessary to salvation were left to be handed down by Tradition, because these might be safely preserved in their integrity by such a conveyance, and afterwards come to learn that those institutions have been in fact greatly altered from their original form, they will begin to suspect that the whole doctrine of supernatural grace is nothing better than a "cunningly devised fable."

For our part, we are convinced that the whole foundation of this system is unstable, and that God has not thus made his Church dependent for salvation upon such an insecure guarantee. We can find no unalterable model of government drawn for the christian Church in Scripture, as there was for the Jewish. And

it appears to us that, from the analogy of the Jewish Church, a strong presumption may be drawn against supposing that a minute Ritual and unalterable Frame of government *was* intended to be imposed on us, and yet left to be handed down by Tradition. In the case of the Jews, the *experiment* (so to speak) was tried, of a fixed and minute model unalterably bound upon the people; and *there*, anxious precaution for preserving that model from being defaced, was taken by an exact delineation of it in the written Law. Yet, after all, we find that it was overlaid by a mass of human Traditions, encroaching upon the remains of liberty which God had left his Church, disfiguring his plainest institutions, and yet claiming an origin equally divine with that written Word of God which they impiously "made of none effect." In the written word of the New Testament, on the contrary, a different course was taken. *There* no Rules are given, except the general ones which direct that "all shall be done decently and in order;" a method which, while it gives the constitutions of the Church all the lawful force they really need, as acts of legitimate authority, having the peace and order of the Society for their object, seems intended to shut out all attempts at investing them with a higher character, as unalterable divine Institutions. In ritual, as well as in moral, matters, the design of the Gospel seems not so much to give the Church minute *external* directions, as to infuse a spirit and form a character which shall enable men to govern themselves.

But these considerations have led us too far from our immediate subject. We hope soon to resume it, in the next "Caution."

March, 1852. .

No. XVII.

WE have occupied you long with an endeavour to point out the way in which the Tract-movement is likely to lead men into Infidelity. But if you duly estimate the importance of the subject, you will not think that too much time has been spent upon it. That infidelity is daily spreading is a complaint one hears on all sides ; it behoves every good Christian to look narrowly for the Spring of that bitter stream which is welling fast, though often silently, all around us. Now let any one but pass in review before his mind the several points which have been dwelt upon in the last five Cautions, and consider in how many ways the teaching and practice of the Tract-party, as there described, tend to create and to foster irreligion ; and he will see, we think, no reason to wonder at the amount of it that now exists. He will rather conclude that it might have been anticipated from a knowledge of human nature ; and that there is ground for alarming apprehensions of its increase.

For let a man be but once convinced—1st, That Christianity cannot *stand the test of inquiry*,—2ndly, that he has no ground for certainty as to the *real belief* of those who teach it,—3rdly, that *Scripture need not be studied*,—4thly, that he had better *withdraw his thoughts*, as much as possible, from the subject of religious Truth, since otherwise he could not but exercise that private judgment which is forbidden,—and 5thly, that Christianity is mainly a system of *outward ordinances*:—let him but adopt all these notions, and what is there to stand between him and Infidelity or Indifferentism ?

There are many other points, indeed, besides the five that we have just enumerated, in which Tractism tends to Infidelity: but to go through them *all* would be a long and a superfluous labour. For, if we have proved our case as to these five, which are points wherein the party generally agrees, the tendency of the System will have been sufficiently exposed already: and if any one who has read and considered what we have said upon

those points in the former Cautions, is still unsatisfied with our arguments, we have but slender hopes of convincing him by anything that might be added upon other similar Topics. There is, however, one other of such Topics which it may be profitable to notice briefly here; because the point it relates to is one of the very first elements of Tractism, and one which is received by a great many who would at present disown several of those other Tractite tenets, the Infidel tendency of which we have been exposing.

The point to which we are now referring is the notion (very widely prevalent) of a Universal Church, forming, necessarily and by divine Institution, one *visible Society upon earth*, to which all Christians owe obedience. This error has—we may remark in passing—been greatly fostered (if not occasioned) by the ambiguity of words.

The Church (meaning thereby the Congregation or Assembly of all Christ's subjects) is spoken of in Scripture as *one Body*, with one Head, and under one common authority. But the Church, in this sense of the word, manifestly is not, and indeed cannot be in the present state of things, one visible Society upon earth; because its *Head* is invisible, and in Heaven; and because it is impossible that any Society should subsist where its Head is absent, and there is no Governor appointed by Him to exercise supreme rule in his place over the whole Society.

Again it is plain from Scripture that our Lord's will is that men upon earth who recognise Him as their Master, by openly professing Faith in Him, and submitting to Baptism into his name, should form themselves into Communities—also called *Churches*—for the purpose of mutual edification, and the support and farther extension of his religion in the world; which Communities, like all other Societies, require of course some kind of government and external organization.

And, when we have to speak of what concerns all such Societies in common, we naturally speak of them as "the Church;" just as when we have to speak of what is common to all *States*, or *Magistrates*, or *Farmers*, or *Physicians*, we talk of "the State," "the Magistrate," "the Farmer," "the Physician," or "the Faculty,"—that is, the faculty of medicine.

We say, for example, "The cure of souls belongs to *the Church*;" but arrangements for man's temporal well-being are

the proper business of *the State*." Or again: "The *Magistrate* may enforce his laws by civil penalties; but *the Church* has no right to inflict such punishments." When the Apostle Peter bids us "submit to *the King* as supreme," he certainly was not thinking of one universal monarch, but of every particular king, each in his own realm.

Now, when we speak thus of "the State," "the Magistrate," and "the Farmer," &c., every one understands that what we mean to speak of is, each and every State, magistrate, or farmer, &c.; and, therefore, there would have been, one might have thought, no difficulty in understanding that, when "the Church" is spoken of in the same manner, it is each and every particular church, or society of Christians, that is meant. But men first confounded together the two meanings of the word *Church* pointed out above; and then, when they heard "the Church" spoken of as something visible upon earth, with earthly governors and an outward organization, imagined that some one grand Society was meant, instead of all the particular societies that can truly be described as *Churches*.

Now, if our Master's design had really been to make us subjects of one grand visible Society upon earth, which should be divinely commissioned to make laws for all Christians, He would not have left us—if He were indeed from heaven and not of men—in any reasonable doubt as to *who* and *where* are the *Governors* of that society, and *what* its decisions. For an outward visible Society, of which the very chief governors and laws are matter of dispute among its subjects, can be no better than a rope of sand; and the very purpose of instituting such a Body would be defeated by leaving such points as these in uncertainty.

Now experience shows that, the more any one inquires, the more difficult it is to find all this: and hence it will, in the end, be inferred by many, that as it is not easy—nor indeed possible—to find that Supreme Ruler who speaks the will of the Universal Church, Christianity is a fable; for a fable it surely is, if it teach that obedience to the Universal Church is necessary, and yet leaves us destitute of all means of discovering how and to whom that obedience is to be rendered.

Some, indeed, who are more easily satisfied, will accede at once to the claims of Rome: because she claims what they think must exist *somewhere*, and what evidently does not exist any-

where else—a present living authority (in the person of the Pope, the pretended successor of the Apostle Peter) for the final decision of all controversies, and making laws for the government of all Christians throughout the world. But the Supremacy of Peter even in his own life-time, and again his transmission of that supremacy to the Popes, cannot be proved from Scripture, nor indeed from any historical record whatever—unless you first submit to take the word of the very claimant of infallible interpretation in proof that his interpretation *is* infallible.

Others again will for a while find shelter in a professed submission to what they call General Councils, and which they allege to be entitled to unqualified obedience, as the representatives of the whole Body of the Church. But the more quicksighted will soon perceive (1) that there is no evidence whatever of the divine institution of any such Assemblies—no conveyance from Christ of any supreme authority to them, nor promise of infallible guidance to even a really General Council: (2) that, in point of fact, no Council that was ever held can be proved to have been a fair representation of *all* Christians: (3) that there is no proof that a bare *majority* in a Council has any right, except by an original unanimous agreement to that effect, to set aside the minority, and to call its decisions the decisions of the Council; and (4), even waving every other question, that there is *now* no general Council sitting; no power able or willing to convoke one, and no likelihood, nay no possibility, of bringing together such an assembly. Where then—it will be asked—is the seat of government *now*? Is it that there was *once* such an Universal Church as we are told of, but that there is no longer any?

Thus, when men have been persuaded that Christ *intended* to make all Christians form one visible organized Society upon earth, and yet left them destitute of the means requisite for carrying such a design into effect, they will be tempted to say, “This man began to build and was not able to finish,” and consequently to regard Christianity itself as a failure, and its founder as a fanatic or an impostor.

What sacrifices have these men made to attain that unity and concord on which their hearts were fixed, and how vain have all their sacrifices and labours proved! They thought this object not too dearly purchased by giving up private judgment, and

agreeing to abide by the decisions of the Church-Universal, "the authorized guide." But, after bidding farewell to Reason and to Truth, they have found themselves still unable to attain this unity, or even to agree about the very foundation upon which it was to be built,—the exact powers, and the residence, of the authorized guide whom they proposed to follow. They set about building a Tower of Babel, and fell into confusion. Some went to Rome: others to the Via Media; and both are "scattered over the face of the whole earth."

Now, it is not strange if those who have been taught to regard such abortive attempts as results of an application of the genuine principles of Christianity, should come to look with suspicion, or something worse, upon the principles which have led to such an issue.

Let us add one more instance in the case of Confession :—

"We believe," says an able writer, "that even in the hands of an honest and enlightened confessor, compulsory confession,—that is to say, a confession in which the penitent is not allowed to select the matters on which he wishes for advice, but is bound, under the threat of incurring mortal sin, to tell every action, every wish, and every thought—with all its advantages, which are very great—is, on the whole, productive of a largely preponderating amount of evil. The great objection to it is, that it creates a new sin—a sin of which a Protestant cannot be guilty, and a sin to which those whose consciences it will affect most mischievously, are peculiarly exposed.

"We can suppose a person so insensible as to be able, without deep humiliation, to stand in mental nakedness before his priest. But a man with such coarse feelings is not likely to have a sensitive conscience. Gross, palpable sins are all that his memory is likely to accuse himself of. He confesses them, performs his penance, and obtains absolution; and the only evil is, the fear that the sin which has been so easily wiped out may be repeated;—an evil which a resolute and sagacious confessor may generally prevent by aggravating the severity of the penance. But persons, especially females, of shrinking delicacy of thought and feeling, are likely to be both curious in detecting their own mental improprieties, and averse to exposing them. Every attendance at the confessional must be a struggle between shame and duty. If duty prevail, we cannot but suspect

“ that it must be at the expense of brushing off the bloom of the
 “ mind. We cannot think that every secret thought can be
 “ revealed without familiarising the revealer with ideas which
 “ might have passed through the brain without a trace, if atten-
 “ tion had not been called to them. If shame prevail, a mortal
 “ sin is committed under circumstances peculiarly formidable. It
 “ is committed deliberately, before the shrine, while the idea of
 “ God is present to the sinner’s mind ; and it is unabsolved. The
 “ feeling of such a sin is likely to drive the timid into religious
 “ madness, and to induce the bold to take refuge in infidelity.
 “ We know that, in Roman-catholic countries, the necessity of
 “ confession is one of the obstacles to a religious life. ‘ I do not
 “ go to church,’ we have been told, ‘ because I do not communi-
 “ cate ; and I cannot communicate, because I cannot bear to con-
 “ fess.’ According to the Roman-catholic creed, such a state of
 “ life is one of mortal sin. Those who indulge in it, therefore,
 “ must *hope* that that creed is false, at least in this respect. It
 “ is seldom, however, that a person, bred a Roman-catholic,
 “ believes his creed to be only *partially* erroneous. The church
 “ loses her infallible authority. With that authority fall numerous
 “ articles, both of faith and practice, which have no other support.
 “ A man with a strong predisposition to religious emotions (in the
 “ language of phrenologists, with a powerful organ of veneration),
 “ may stop himself on this inclined plane, catch hold of Scripture,
 “ and, like our ancestors, adopt Protestant opinions. But such
 “ instances are rare in this sceptical century. In the present
 “ state of public feeling, few that abandon Roman Catholicism
 “ rest short of deism.”*

There are not a few, however, upon whom these, or indeed any arguments, have but little effect, because they will not trust themselves to examine the arguments alleged, or make up their minds upon the subject. “ To be sure,”—such persons will be apt to say—“ there does *seem* to be something very wrong in the Tract-system ; and the arguments against it have *never been answered* ; but it is upheld by some very eminent, and learned, and apparently pious men : and are plain unlearned Christians competent to decide a question, on which there are differences

* *Edinburgh Review*, No. 184, pp. 528, 529.

among those who are far their superiors? It is best for us to avoid all controversy, and go on 'doing our duty in that state of life to which we are called.' "

Now what we would wish to press upon such persons is this—that this objection (if it were allowed) would make quite empty our Lord's warning to "beware of false prophets;" for it must be supposed that these "false apostles—deceitful workers, transforming themselves as the apostles of Christ," are likely to be—many of them—men of superior ability to those they seek to delude. Our Lord could not but have known this: and yet He expected (and therefore, of course, thought it possible) that ordinary men, in point of learning and intelligence, should be able to detect these "wolves in sheep's clothing." Nor is the task so hopeless as some are tempted by their own indolence to imagine, if we only bring to the work those requisites which are within the reach of ordinary men, as well as of the learned and able divine.

These requisites are—(1) Attentive study and calm inquiry and reflection. Do not be in a hurry to form an opinion, but do not unnecessarily put it off. Do not decide without inquiry, but do not, in order to avoid deciding, omit inquiry.—(2) A sincere desire to attain *Truth*, in order that you may regulate your opinions and conduct by it alone; and (3) pure *moral* principle. For a man of plain common sense, without any eminent learning or ability, will easily understand, if he be but thoroughly honest, what ought to be thought of men who habitually and openly act against their own professed principles. He will abhor and reject all such *inconsistency*.

It is true, indeed, that no man who is not *perfect* can be *altogether* consistent; since every fault he commits must be a departure from some better principle within him. But by *inconsistency* we mean a *deliberate* and *systematic course* of action quite at variance with one's real or professed principles.

A man, for example, who is overcome by some provocation, so as to use some rough language, or do some act of violence, is, in a certain degree, inconsistent, supposing him to hold that meekness and forgiveness are christian virtues which he ought to practise. But to give way on some trying occasion to an infirmity of temper, is quite a different kind of inconsistency from that of the man who should practise and advocate a System of

bitter persecution, while professing the utmost detestation of all persecution. And so in other cases.

It may be said to be inconsistent with good husbandry to allow *any* weeds to grow up with the corn ; and yet it would be hard to find a corn-field that had not a single weed in it. But if you should meet with a farmer professing to be anxious for good crops of corn, who should suffer his fields to be quite overrun with weeds, or who should sow half his land with wheat and half with the seeds of nettles and thistles, you would reckon him utterly inconsistent, if not downright mad.

Now try the Tractites by this test.

(1.) Observe in the first place their professed reverence for Episcopal authority, as compared with their insolent defiance of it in practice. In the earlier Tracts especially, nothing could surpass the tone of profound submission to Episcopal authority in which the writers spoke. Language seemed to sink beneath them in magnifying the office of a Bishop. The maxim of Ignatius, "Do nothing without the Bishop," was continually on their lips. And so, for a long time, they proceeded on their work, under cover of a cloud of splendid compliments to those ecclesiastical Superiors whom they were even then, in fact, setting aside, and whom they were soon to treat with bitter reviling and scornful contempt. Bishops were then "the centres of the Church's unity"—they were "on a level with the Apostles in religious authority;"—their "jurisdiction was to be obeyed and never questioned;"—and men were taught to be as sure that "the Bishop is Christ's appointed representative as if they actually saw upon his head a cloven tongue, like as of fire." In the meanwhile, what was the work in which these dutiful and submissive men were engaged? They—a handful of Presbyters and Deacons—without the express sanction, without the cognizance of any one Bishop—of any one regular ecclesiastical Authority whatever in England—were concerting plans for bringing the whole Body under their own influence and control, for effecting what they themselves owned to be no less than an Ecclesiastical Revolution, and effectually "unprotestantizing" the Protestant Church of these realms. And, in the prosecution of this work, no pains were spared to make their proceedings seem to be the Acts of the Church ; so that, when they had, for example, procured a censure of Dr. Hampden by the Convocation

at Oxford;—though that censure was passed in such haste, and under such unfortunate circumstances, that some of the leading movers in it acknowledged that they had not, at the time, read the book they were censuring, but only garbled extracts from it, and afterwards, when they had read it, pronounced it to be quite free from blame;—yet such a censure, so passed by the Convocation of a University, was set down by Mr. Palmer, in a printed book, among the *Church's* condemnations of heresy.

Such were their professions, and such their proceedings, while left to carry out their work without hindrance. But as soon as the tide began to turn against them, they showed their real contempt of authority in the most audacious manner.

For instance, when the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, and a Committee of six Doctors of Divinity, passed a solemn censure upon one of Dr. Pusey's sermons, that regular tribunal of the University was denounced by one of the organs of the Tract party as a monstrous creature, "lengthy, *dragly*, crawling, insinuating, elusive, broken into joints, slimy and venomous:"* and by another, in equally good taste, as "six *penny whistles*, selected and tuned by one *Maitre-de-Ballet*."†

Again, when some of the Bishops found it necessary to express their dissatisfaction with the Tract-writers in published Charges, the "ENGLISH CHURCHMAN" deemed it proper and decent to declare that "the time seems to have come for complaining of this mode of *harassing the Church* by publishing these little *addresses*."‡ The Bishop of Chester was then openly declared to have "tampered with the received doctrines of the Church:"§ the Bishop of Worcester was contemptuously set aside as having "small Latin, and less Greek, and very doubtful English:" the Archbishop of Dublin was pronounced a disseminator not of one only, but of several heresies:|| the Bishop of Gloucester was said by Dr. Pusey to have failed of perceiving the real meaning of what he censured; and this failure was charitably ascribed to "an affliction in which all must sympathize"—that is, in plain words, to a sickness under which his lordship had been labouring: and so, of almost the whole Bench. But it is unnecessary to multiply evidence upon this point, since hardly a day now passes

* July, 1843, *British Critic*, p. 256.

† *English Churchman*, No. 29, p. 456.

‡ No. 55, p. 43.

§ No. 56.

|| *British Critic*, April, 1842, p. 302.

in which some proof is not afforded of these men's resolute contempt of all episcopal authority when used even in the slightest and most trivial matter against themselves. The operations of the party were, in this respect, at first, disguised, but are now almost undisguised, *Presbyterianism*. Now, surely any honest man, whether Presbyterian or Episcopalian, must condemn the conduct of those who set up a usurping and self-appointed Presbytery, to dictate to and oppose and insult the government of the Church they chuse to belong to; and this, while, all the time, they are professing, not only to be devoted members of an Episcopal Church, but also to condemn and utterly disallow all forms of Church-government but the Episcopal. For supposing a set of men who called themselves loyal subjects of a regal government, should form themselves into a democratic assembly, to hurl defiance at the Sovereign and all the rulers and institutions of their Country, would not every honest man, whether of Royalist or Republican principles, regard them as self-condemned?

II. Again, compare their professed reverence for the Church, with those censures of the Liturgy, non-natural interpretations of the Articles, and introduction of unheard-of innovations, which we laid before you in Caution XIII. In 1838, the *British Critic* solemnly protested, in the name of the party, that they desired no changes in the Prayer-book, and that what had satisfied Andrews and Laud would for ever satisfy them; yet, two years after, the same journal announced with exultation that the *Liturgies of Rome and Paris* were being largely imported into England for the purposes of *Devotion*; and now the desire of "re-appropriating" whatever was deliberately expunged from our Liturgy at the Reformation is hardly dissembled; and if men are taught to submit to the present Prayer-book, it is to submit in the same spirit as they would to a famine, or a pestilence, or a bill of pains and penalties, or any other inevitable affliction.

III. Compare, lastly, the evidence we have adduced of their professed hostility to Romanism with their avowals of their own insincerity in the censures which they pronounced, and with their extravagant laudations of the very same Church. Of that Church, Mr. Newman, while he was professedly a Protestant, was suffered by his party, with hardly a murmur on their part, to declare, that "She alone, amid all the errors and evils of her

practical system, has given free scope to the feelings of awe, mystery, tenderness, reverence, devotedness, and other feelings which may be especially called Catholic.”*

Lay together, we say, all these glaring inconsistencies, of which any man of common-sense is a competent judge, and say whether they are not at least sufficient to take off all the weight to be ascribed to these men’s supposed piety, and to their learning and abilities.

But why, it will be asked perhaps, cite as evidence against the Tract-party at the present day, the words and acts of that party some years ago, when led by men who have now abandoned it, and gone over to Rome? The reason is plain. It is because the very same persons who adhered to and supported those men up to the moment when they actually quitted our ranks for those of the enemy, are still the leaders of that party; and, with such evidence of the tendency of their principles before their eyes, daily multiplied by fresh and fresh secessions to Romanism, are still labouring on in the same work, and with the same inevitable issue. Do but consider the *suddenness* with which, in almost all cases of conversion from Tractism to Romanism, the change is made. You have men officiating one day in a Protestant Church, and almost the next, getting themselves rebaptized by a Romish Priest;—one day officiating in a Church which declares the Invocation of Saints, and the Worship of the Host, as practised in the Church of Rome, idolatrous; and almost the next, openly invoking the Saints, and worshipping the Host, according to the Rites of the Church of Rome;—one day officiating in a Church which pronounces that the Bishop of Rome hath and ought to have no authority in the realm of England; and the next, acknowledging his authority and swearing to obey it. Do but consider this, and ask yourselves, can the system which has influenced these men up to the moment of their change be really calculated to make men attached members of the Church which they quit so suddenly?—or is it not rather evident that every principle which is of any real strength to keep the mind from Romanism must have been sapped and destroyed *long before* they took the decided step of quitting our communion?

Do not be deceived. The great Body of the Tractites have no

* *Letter to Jelf*, pp. 25, 26.

intention of remaining with us, except in the hope of carrying out their grand scheme of unprotestantizing our church, and re-making it after the model that pleases themselves. If they find this hopeless—as we trust they will—they will infallibly move to Rome. Some may persevere longer than others; but none will persevere when all hope of effecting this 'is extinguished. Questions of doctrine, truth or falsehood, fact or fiction, are, with the great Body of them, matters of comparatively minor consequence. What they want is something to give free scope "to the FEELINGS of awe, mystery, tenderness, reverence, devotedness, and other FEELINGS which may be especially called Catholic." They will find it with us, if they can. If not, they will seek it where Mr. Newman has told them it may be found with certainty. They have themselves almost said this in so many words over and over again. They have, with an effrontery scarcely to be paralleled, thrown the blame of their disciples' secession to Rome, upon the Bishops of our Church,—because those Bishops felt themselves bound in conscience to protest at last against some of the most flagrant iniquities of the Tract-movement. They have ventured to address our prelates in words of deliberate menace, warning them of the preparation which has been made for a large defection of the most promising sons of our Church;—a preparation made by these very men themselves, who, by their own confession, have brought their scholars into such a state of devout attachment to the Anglican church and hostility to Romanism, that they are ready, at a very short notice, to renounce the Anglican church and embrace Romanism, as soon as ever the countenance they have hitherto met with shall be withdrawn.

Can, then, the System of belief, and tone of sentiment, which is capable of so easily and quickly accommodating itself to Romanism in its worst shape, be, if indulged and fostered to the utmost, what these men pretend that it is, the surest protection and safeguard against Romish error?

The truth is, that Tractism has no strength or power at all, except in that which it has in common with Romanism. It grew out of the same root of corrupt human nature, and was nourished by the same influences as the Romish system; and a few words upon that matter will form, in the next Caution, a good conclusion of this part of our subject.

No. XVIII.

"Be not children in understanding; howbeit, in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men."—1 Cor. xiv. 20.

IT is said that, some years ago, there was a bridge at Bath in so crazy a condition that cautious persons chose rather to make a long circuit than run the risk of crossing it. One day, however, a very nervous lady, hurrying home to dress for the evening, came suddenly upon the spot without, till that moment, remembering the danger. The sight of the bridge reminded her of its ruinous state, just as she was about to set her foot upon it. But what was she to do? If she went on, the frail arch might give way under her; to go round would be fatiguing, and attended with much loss of time. She stood for some minutes trembling in anxious hesitation; but at last a lucky thought occurred to her—she called for a sedan-chair, and was *carried over* in that conveyance!

You laugh, perhaps, at this good lady's odd expedient for escaping danger by shutting out the view of it. But is not something of the same kind happening around you every day? When people, who are alarmed and perplexed at the danger of having to judge for themselves in religious matters, think to escape that danger by chusing to take some Guide as an infallible one, and believe or disbelieve as he bids them, what is this but crossing the crazy bridge in a sedan-chair? In determining to believe whatever their Guide affirms, they are in reality chusing to make every single exercise of faith which follows that original determination; and they are chusing to believe him infallible, into the bargain. There are at least as many chances of error as before against every single article of faith in the creed which they adopt upon their guide's authority; and there are also additional chances against that authority itself. Thus, in order to get over more safely, they put not only their own weight, but that of the sedan-chair also, upon the tottering arch.

If a man, who felt himself encumbered with a number of small debts, were to borrow from a money-lender a sum sufficient to pay them off, but at a usurious interest, and should then feel quite at ease and happy in having got rid of his incumbrances, would not every one say he had acted a very silly part? He would only have substituted *one* heavy debt for many small ones; and, in the end, would have to pay more for that "accommodation" (as the usurer would call it) than if he had patiently worked through his original difficulties. Now borrowing the authority of a supposed infallible guide to decide for us, is really making ourselves responsible *at once* for each of his decisions to which we thus promise submission; and, besides that, for submitting to him at all. We shall have to answer to the Almighty, still, for every error we adopt on our guide's authority; and furthermore, for bowing to his guidance without good proof of his legitimate authority.

After all evasions have been tried, we must, whether we will or no, if we would believe at all, fall back upon our own judgment; and it is always by something that seems to them evidence, that all men, let them say what they will, ever did, and ever do, and ever *must* determine their belief. The old definition stands, and Man is still "a rational animal;" and whether he reason rightly or wrongly, rashly or discreetly, hastily or cautiously, reason he will, to the end. When the question is, whether we are to believe, or doubt, or disbelieve anything, we *must* determine that question by something which comes before the mind as *proof*. It may be a good or it may be a bad argument in itself; but we must in some way either rationally convince, or sophistically juggle our understandings into the persuasion of its being a good reason, before, do what we will, we *can* believe the thing asserted to be true.

And this will help to show you the absurdity of those who say that Conscience, and not Reason, is the judge of Truth in religious matters. For, since men really *cannot* believe or disbelieve without something before the mind which it takes for evidence, the first dictate of a sound conscience would be to examine that evidence carefully, lest we should be deceived; so that, following conscience in this sense, would come to the same thing as following reason. But what these men mean by conscience is certain "FEELINGS of awe and reverence and admira-

tion," and blind submission to authority, which they are pleased to call by that name; and the course which they mean to recommend is, taking for evidence of the *truth* of a religious system its apparent fitness for gratifying such feelings.

The difference, then, between them and us is just this—we demand, in religious matters, the same sort of evidence as the known laws of reason, and the common experience of mankind require as the only adequate proof in other matters. *They* substitute for such proof, a sort of evidence in which impartial reason can discover no cogency, and upon which they would themselves refuse to act in the ordinary affairs of life. For though they will tell you that natural piety requires a man to abide by the creed of an ignorant or doting parent, or pastor, yet you will rarely find them ready to purchase a blind horse, or sell out stock at a disadvantage, or exchange a good farm for a bad one, in deference to the same venerable authority.

Unquestionably it must be granted that, in the most carefully conducted process of reasoning, after the most watchful sifting and weighing of evidence, the mind of man is still liable to error. But is this a reason for discarding all *helps* to the understanding? for flinging away care, and abandoning ourselves to chance? If indeed mistakes accumulated in proportion as we weighed evidence, scrutinized proof, and brought reason to bear, there might be some pretext for seeking to diminish those errors, by relaxing as much as possible the efforts which occasioned them;—by endeavouring not to reason at all, or as little, or as badly as we could. But if errors spring from haste and prejudice, and the imperfection of the understanding, is it not a strange remedy to quicken its too hurried pace, and limit its too narrow powers? Would a man act wisely, who, puzzled by a long and intricate calculation, and finding that, with all his care, he could not be sure of having escaped some errors, should boldly efface the sum total, and put down such a result as *ought*, on moral grounds, in his opinion, to be correct? Would any one chuse such a clerk in money-matters? Yet this is really the history of the theory and practice of what is called (but sadly miscalled) Faith in many minds. They grow impatient at the doubts and difficulties which beset the operations of the understanding. Like Jack (in Swift's profane pasquinade) they have mused so long on the imperfections of eyesight, and the

mischievous of optical illusions, that they resolve to shut their eyes entirely, or, at least, never venture out in the daylight.*

But observe the inconsistency of these men. Their great accusation against Reason is, that it can never lead to *Certainty*: that, if we follow it, there is always room for examination and re-examination in endless succession; and we can never be sure that all *possible* evidence has been examined, or the whole case thoroughly sifted. Now what is their substitute for these uncertainties? "Fling yourself," they say, "into the system next at hand, with an unhesitating Faith, in the hope that, *if it be not true*, this total surrender of your mind to it will, sooner or later, discover its deficiencies, and lead you to a better. Work it out thoroughly if you can; and if you find it fail to satisfy your religious sentiments, then, and not till then, try another."†

What sort of *faith* can these men possibly mean? You may be, it is granted, in your first choice, quite mistaken: yet your belief must be full and firm; your surrender of yourself total and unqualified; and you are comforted in yielding this unhesitating faith, and making this complete surrender, by the assurance that it will not improbably lead you to discover that your full and firm belief is misplaced, and that you have surrendered yourself to Man, and not to God. You pass on, then, to another and a higher system; but still the moral and religious feelings may be, and probably are, but imperfectly developed. The infant judge of Truth may have cast off its swaddling-bands, and yet be only in short coats. In a third stage, it may gain more manly attire, and yet, even after that, a thousand more seemly forms of clothing may await its growing limbs. Who knows but in the end it may outgrow them all? Naked it came forth from its mother's womb, and naked it may return. May not,—if these notions be correct,—Pantheism or Atheism be the final issue (as we know it actually has in many instances) of such a development of man's moral and religious feelings?

"To make," then, as these men advise, "the Will the slave

* A high authority in the Romish Church has lately denounced as highly dangerous the doctrine (which, by the way, was deliberately sanctioned by other high Authorities in that Church) that christian faith—in the sense in which faith is a virtue—does not consist in blind credulity, but in candidly and fairly and carefully listening to evidence, and firmly believing what there seems good reason to believe. This view he says is utterly hostile to the system of his Church.

In this probably he is in the right.

† WARD'S *Ideal*, *passim*.

of" those feelings which they call "conscience, and the Understanding the slave of the will," is deliberately to plunge into an abyss of darkness which no man can fathom. For though, as we have said, it is impossible for any one to believe by mere feeling, and without some real or supposed *reason* for belief, yet it is well known that the feelings may greatly influence the judgment, and make what is really weak evidence *seem* very strong. The judgment is like a pair of scales, and evidence like the weights; but the Will holds the balance in its hand; and even a slight jerk will be sufficient, in many cases, to make the lighter scale appear the heavier. And the rapid progress of Tractism itself is mainly the result of such an influence of the feelings upon the judgment of men.

For, (1,) the clergy (among whom, remember, it first gained ground) were predisposed to favour it by the elevated character which it seemed to confer upon their Order, and the power with which it promised to invest them. And all this was the more flattering to them as a class, since it ascribed to them so much dignity, and such almost super-human powers, in virtue of their office merely, independently of personal worth and qualifications.

Tractism made the clergy mediators between heaven and earth. It told them that the salvation of men depended upon certain rites and ceremonies which *they only* could perform. It made them sacerdotal priests; it gave them a right to demand the "confession" of the laity, and invested them with the exclusive power of "absolving" penitents; and moreover it made them the sole distributors of alms, and thus concentrated upon them all the influence which the administration of large sums of money always brings with it. An instance has come to our knowledge (which we believe to be only one out of a multitude) which shows how anxious the Tractite clergy are to gain and to monopolize this source of influence. A lady, who was in the habit of going in person to the houses of the poor, to "visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction," distributing such relief as seemed most suitable in each case, was strongly remonstrated with for this practice by a clergyman, who insisted on it that it was her duty to hand to him *all* she had to bestow, as an "offering on the altar," and to make him the channel through which all her charity was to flow!

True it is that while the Tractites were thus in fact magnify-

ing their office as clergy, they sought (in Bacon's words) "to propitiate envy," by talking largely of the *awful responsibilities* which such an elevated view of it brought upon them.

But it is easy to see that such a view of it enables an arrogant and vainglorious mind to get rid of all that would be really most irksome to it in the discharge of the pastoral duty. For, the sense of responsibility is apt to be the most pressing in cases where no *fixed rules* can be laid down as a measure of the duty to be performed, and where everything depends on the sincerity of our inward desire to perform it thoroughly.

It is, therefore, a very anxious work, to be employed in trying by argument and persuasion to infuse a sense of religion into others; because we are left to judge for ourselves what arguments and persuasions should be used, and when and how far we can press them with advantage.

But if the pastoral office consisted mainly in going through a fixed routine of showy ceremonies in behalf of the people, *that* would be a work not only much more flattering to our vanity, but also much more easy to our conscience.

Again, to be obliged to discover for ourselves the true meaning of Scripture, and then to get others to perceive that such *is* its true meaning, this is a work of much responsibility and labour. But to deliver, like oracles, a set of established dogmas, which we have taken on trust, and without examination, from something that we call "the Church," this is an office which has a very dignified look, but which is very easily executed.

Again, it is a difficult and anxious task to give *counsel* to perplexed consciences, and rationally to clear up their doubts: but to quiet them by positive assurances of pardon, and by the application of a regular scale of penances, has much more the air of authority, while it brings with it much less trouble.

But even those of the clergy who could not be caught by such temptations as these, were predisposed in favour of such a doctrine as the "Apostolical Succession," for example, from the strongly marked distinction which it made between *their* ministry and that of the dissenters. They could not see (and even now there are many that cannot see) that there was any medium between such a doctrine as that, and admitting the *validity* of the ordination of any ignorant mechanic, set up by a handful of illiterate fanatics, or by himself. Nay, they fancied that, except

public preaching, or ministering the Sacraments, before he is lawfully called and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given unto them in the Congregation, to call and send ministers into the Lord's Vineyard."

But, while the doctrine of "Apostolical Succession" flattered the prejudices of the whole Order of the Clergy, the *Bishops* in particular, were tempted to encourage—or at least, not resist,—the early spread of Tractism, by the large professions which its founders made of unbounded submission to episcopal authority. Some of the Bishops seem, at first, to have imagined that, whether the principles of the Tractites were quite sound or not, the influence of such a movement would tend to re-establish (what was much wanted) a sense of the duty of obedience to church-rulers: and they appear to have imagined that any man, who promised such unbounded subjection, and expressed such awful reverence for the episcopal office, might be easily kept within proper limits, if requisite, by the slightest exertion of their authority. Like Lear with his daughters, they failed to perceive that such lavish and extravagant professions were a sign of insincerity; and, like him, they have been rudely undeceived. They have seen their authority despised, and themselves openly insulted, by the very men who spoke of them as "living Apostles," and Rulers whose slightest wish was to be a law.

(II.) Again, the *High Aristocracy* were naturally disposed to favour Tractism. They like what is genteel and splendid, in religion as well as in worldly matters; and so, they were the more readily caught by the showy ceremonies of the Tractites, and the fine antiquarian taste which they displayed in building and decorating churches—the carving of screens—the embroidering of altar-cloths—the soft, sweet manner in which the prayers were intoned, and the picturesque way in which the performance of the Liturgy was made a pleasing spectacle. Moreover, the Aristocracy are accustomed to be *saved trouble*, and to have things *done for them* by others. They like, therefore, to have some one to act towards them in religion as the apothecary does in medicine; whom they implicitly trust in that, and swallow the dose he prescribes, while they would scorn to admit him as an equal, or take pains to learn pharmacy themselves.

In the same manner, they entrust the care of their horses to their grooms, and of their pleasure-grounds to their gardener, without putting themselves to the trouble of learning their arts.

Now the claims of the Tractite Clergy exactly fell in with these lazy and supercilious aristocratic prejudices. The Clergy offered to take the burden of *understanding* religion, and the responsibility of determining how laymen ought to act, in religious matters, off the minds of men unaccustomed to trouble, and impatient of responsibility; and thus both parties were deluded into the persuasion that, by such an arrangement, the dignity of each was increased.

But surely there can be no real dignity in devolving upon another that pursuit of religious truth—that personal care about our soul's best interests—which is the noblest employment in which any human Being can be engaged. Nor, on the other hand, is the clergyman truly honoured—but rather degraded—by being placed in a position corresponding to that of a groom or a gardener.

For, a man is *really* most honouring him whom he takes to instruct him in what he himself makes it his great object to *learn*. A medical student looks up to an able medical lecturer; a student of law to the teacher of law; and so in other similar cases. But it is quite a different and far inferior kind of honour that is paid to one who merely tells you exactly *what to do*, in some matter which you do not wish to learn for yourself. A supposed skilful gardener is *implicitly trusted* by one who has no skill in horticulture, and who leaves him to take care that the garden shall have good flowers and fruit, and, therefore, abandons it wholly to his management. Such inferior agents, however, are very apt to pride themselves highly upon the influence which they exercise over great personages, and the trust which such exalted individuals repose in them; not considering that any such great personage trusts them implicitly in proportion to his own ignorance and carelessness about such matters; and that, in proportion to that ignorance and carelessness, is his unfitness to judge of the qualifications of the agents whom he employs.

The spread of Tractism, we have no doubt, was greatly favoured by such natural but erroneous notions as these;

and accordingly you cannot have failed to remark that it was amongst the Clergy, and the upper classes, that it made its earliest and most considerable progress.

But, in the meanwhile, its promoters have not trusted merely to circumstances for the advancement of their cause. They have shown a zeal, a skill, and an industry in the prosecution of their object, which might have gained much success, even with far less to favour it in the prejudices of men.

From the first they counted amongst their number many persons of undoubted ability, and of wonderful dexterity and readiness as writers; and at first they gained an almost unexampled command of the public Press. Not to speak of their own Tracts, poured forth with marvellous rapidity, and circulated very widely, there was hardly a leading Journal or Periodical which did not, at the commencement of their career, lend them a helping hand. And though several of these afterwards turned against the system of Tractism, this was not till they had themselves made the young lion strong enough to scorn the assailants who might have strangled him when a cub.

Nor was it only by the open and direct incucation of their opinions they made way for themselves. That which one of the original conspirators aptly called "*the poisoning system*" proved even still more effectual.* Works were produced in almost every style of composition, to catch the unwary, and the tenets of Tractism cautiously infused into them all, so as to steal upon the reader when he least expected them;—when he took up the volume only to verify some fact of ancient history, or to beguile an hour with an amusing tale. Their aim, indeed, was to create a literature for themselves, and exercise an influence over everything that came before the public mind, from the discussions of the severest science down to the songs and stories of the nursery.

By such silent arts as these, they often evaded opposition, by turning no decided front to the enemy. And even in those writings of theirs in which they professed openly to teach or to defend their opinions, there was a great solemnity of style, mixed with a certain *cloudiness* and vagueness of expression, which was at once very imposing to their disciples, and very

* MR. FROUDE, see his *Remains*.

puzzling to their antagonists. Hence, a peculiarly bold assertion was generally guarded with a "So to speak," "if one may use the expression," or "Some how," or "in a manner," or "in a certain sense," or with some other such peace-making qualification. Often a paragraph seemed to open with a flourish of trumpets, as if to announce the coming of some important sentiment; but, after wonderful preparations, the procession had hardly begun, before the meaning, after just giving you a glimpse of its visage, slipped aside under cover of some such timid limitation, and left the empty pomp of glittering verbiage to stalk, in mock solemnity, to the conclusion.

With all their arts, however, they could not long or wholly avoid direct opposition; and when it arose, then, if their assailant were weak or unguarded, they were sure to treat his attack as an important one, and give him an elaborate reply: but if his arguments really pressed them close, and were troublesome to grapple with, their practice was to pass by his work with a sneer, or give it no notice whatever; but act in every respect "*as if it had never been written*," or, at least, never heard of.

It seems to be in pursuance of this same stealthy policy of evading rather than encountering any strong opposition, that the adherents of the party now generally disown the imputation of Tractism, and declare that they have no connexion with any one who can properly be called a Tractite. "Oh, the subject of the Oxford Tracts is hardly ever mentioned among us now. We consider it as gone by. We have no wish to revive an extinct controversy, now that the danger is past. The extravagancies which prevailed at one time are now abandoned, and we regard the whole matter as passed away and obsolete." This is the kind of language which (strange to say) one may hear commonly in the very place where Tractite principles are the most prevailing. And they are thus enabled to spread themselves insidiously, while suspicion is lulled to sleep; like a dry-rot, which ever flourishes the more in proportion as *air and light* are excluded. An avowed Tractite is now as hard to be found as the Fens in Lincolnshire, for which the traveller is always referred to the next parish. "Marshdyke in the Fens!—no such thing. If you want to see *them*, you must go on to Eelpool." You *do* go on to Eelpool; but the Fens are

as far off as ever. "Why certainly there *were* some Fens here formerly, but they have been drained now time out of mind. You will not come to a real Fen till you get to Muddleham." But at Muddleham it is still the same story: and so, if you take the word of the inhabitants, you travel on till you find—(not the Fens, but)—yourself upon the sea-coast, with nothing but the broad ocean before you. So it is with Tractism. Mr. A. declares he is no Tractite, but owns that the name may be properly applied to Mr. B. Mr. B. rejects the imputation, and complains that he has been confounded with Mr. C., from whom he differs very widely. Mr. C. owns that he may go a little further than Mr. B., but still maintains that there is a marked distinction between his views and those of Mr. D., &c., &c. Hardly any one now chuses to avow Tractism. They are only defenders of the "middle course"—the just medium—the VIA MEDIA. They "admire, on the whole, the *early* volumes of the *Tracts for the Times*, but they are shocked and disgusted at the later ones. *Tract* 90, in particular, was going much too far."

Now the VIA MEDIA, as we have already said, is neither more nor less than stopping short between the premises and the conclusion. The premises of Tractism were quite sufficiently laid down in the first two volumes of the *Tracts*, and in the very earliest writings of the school; so plainly, indeed, that from these alone the sagacious author of that clever pamphlet, the "Pope's Pastoral," was enabled to predict (about seventeen years ago) almost all that followed in the later ones. The men, therefore, who are inculcating the principles of the early *Tracts* cannot be safe teachers, though they may chuse, themselves, to abstain from following them out by going over formally and openly to Rome. Nay, they may be all the more dangerous for that very reason. The decoy-duck itself, you know, is never caught, though it leads thousands of its brethren into the snare.

And the principal method of decoy, at present, is not so much argument as other kinds of persuasion. Among these, none seem more popular just now than what are called "brotherhoods" and "sisterhoods of mercy;" the real grand object of which appears to be not so much almsgiving itself, as, under pretence of that, imbuing with Tractite-principles those who receive and those who administer "the charity." And it is

part of the system not only to make a great parade of their works of charity; but also to represent themselves as the *only* persons who pay any regard to the wants of the poor in those localities where such associations have been at work. Bold and persevering assertions often gain credence with the thoughtless; and thus it has come to be believed by many, in some cases which have lately made much noise in the world, that in such and such districts the poor were left wholly unthought of till these sisterhoods arose; the truth being the very reverse: twenty times as much was being done for the poor, and in a more judicious and efficient way, by persons who were content to go about their labour of love quietly, without blowing a trumpet before them, or wearing any fantastic uniform.*

Now if a sincere and confessed Roman-catholic, or one of any other persuasion, does good among the poor, even though he may be influenced, in part, by the desire of attracting people to his religion by "letting his light shine before men," he deserves praise even from those who may think his peculiar sentiments erroneous. But, when persons who are professed members of one church, and secret adherents of another, make use of their works of charity as enticements to those whom they would insidiously proselytize, and whom they seek to seduce from their faith, gradually, by making them at first merely recipients of their charity, or agents in its distribution, then, even though they may have some mixture of humane feelings in what they do, they deserve the strongest censure for that which is fundamentally a system of fraud. And one is shocked and surprised to find people speaking of such persons' "charitable works" as a sort of *set-off* against the deceit.

Surely, if one could address fish as rational Beings, one would not expatiate on the deliciousness of the bait offered, except in the way of warning them of the hook it is meant to conceal.

The success with which, in many places, this kind of artifice has been practised is something really surprising. It seems to realize the ancient fable about the capture of Troy by the Greeks; who, as the tale goes, succeeded at last, by pretending to *raise the siege* in despair, and sail home; while in reality

* See *Letter of Rev. Mr. Cookeley to the Archbishop of Dublin*, on this subject. Fourth Edition. (Ridgway.)

they only departed to a short distance, leaving behind them an ambushed party, who secretly gained admittance within the city-walls, and opened the gates to the besiegers.

Such then are some of the natural prejudices which favour, and some of the arts employed to further the progress of Tractism. But why did it break out just at the time it did? The *predisposition* which always existed in the human mind, must surely have gained some additional strength just twenty years ago, to produce that outbreak. Now, what gave it that strength? Upon this subject we shall have something to say in the next *Caution*.

May, 1852.

No. XIX.

WE have heard of a smart-looking lad about town, who sometimes wrote letters in the newspapers to abuse his betters, and sometimes gained his livelihood by even more questionable means, being once charged by a country squire with having picked his pocket; upon which the culprit retorted, by expressing his astonishment that any one in the garb of a gentleman should descend to such vulgar *personalities*.

Now, to be sure, it is always painful to a right-minded man to be obliged to throw out what are called *personal imputations* against any one. But it is often quite impossible to perform one's duty to the Public without exposing not merely men's errors but their faults. And when such is a man's duty, he should not be deterred from discharging it by the clamours of those very persons whom he is dragging to justice.

Accordingly we have not shrunk from the discharge of our odious duty in the latter Cautions—the duty of exposing not only grievous error, but sad laxity of morals, in the leaders of the Tractite party—although that duty could not be discharged without mixing in what are called personal matters.

If on other occasions we have been careful to avoid the slightest shadow of personal reflexion upon our opponents, *that* affords a strong presumption of our not having departed from our rule in this case without good reason. When indeed a drunken brawling bully “calls names,” however opprobrious, your opinion of the victim whom he bespatters with such foul abuse is not lowered in consequence. But when a grave and circumspect citizen brings a serious charge against his neighbour, and offers to make it good by substantial proof, you naturally begin to think that there must be something in it. And as it never was to please men, or gain a character for mildness, that we observed such moderation, in other cases, but from a sense of duty, so we are quite ready now to displease men, and incur the

imputation of bitterness, if we cannot do our duty without such consequences.

Nor would it be any reason why we should decline this unpleasant duty, if some of us had been ourselves loaded with invectives as heretical teachers, deceitful workers, &c.

No doubt the false apostles whom Paul exposed, brought, in their turn, "many and grievous charges" against *him*; and we are expressly told that the unbelieving Jews did so. But those charges were such as his accusers "could not *prove*." [Acts, xxv. 7.] *His* charges, on the contrary, were such as he could and did substantiate: and the justice or injustice of the charge makes, you will observe, all the difference. If indeed Paul (or any one) were to bring *unfounded* or *unproved* charges against another, *he* may be reminded that similar charges may be, or are, brought against himself. But if he *prove* his charges, the case is altered. Indeed, if it were to be a settled rule that no one should censure any faults or follies, who had ever had any charges, however groundless, brought against himself—on the ground, forsooth, that "he lives in a house of glass, and must not begin throwing stones"—this would be to proclaim complete impunity to all delinquents of every kind. For they would only have to pour forth slanders and invectives against all who should presume to find fault with them. But a person must be very silly or very cowardly who would submit to such a rule. Unsupported accusations and abusive epithets thrown out at random may indeed, for a short time, create a prejudice in a few unthinking minds. But all who have even a tolerable share of good sense will perceive on reflection that to resort to such a procedure proves only this,—that those who adopt it are very angry, and much alarmed at finding facts and arguments brought against them to which no answer can be devised.

Now as to the charges which we have brought against certain persons—*you* can judge for yourselves whether we have not offered reasons for everything we have advanced—reasons which would have been refuted long since, if refutation had been possible. Nor have we ever *substituted* even such well-proved charges against persons, for a refutation of their arguments. But we have *superadded* an exposure of these men's malpractices to a refutation of their sophistries. And this it is, no doubt, which has made some of them so angry; because every honest

man can readily perceive immoral conduct, such as the insincerity which we have exposed ; though it is not every one who can see the weakness of an artfully entangled web of sophistry.

For instance, we thought it both fair, and a necessary duty, to call attention to the *suddenness* of most of the conversions to Romanism that have taken place, as an indication of the concealed process which must have been going on in the minds of those few who have quitted our Church, and which probably *is* going on in the minds of many more of the same party. As we remarked in Caution XVII. p. 330, it is hardly conceivable that a man could have been sincere in professing a devoted attachment to the principles of our Church, and an abhorrence of Romish corruptions and usurpations, who, a few days after, joins the Church of Rome, and condemns ours as heretical. The very suddenness of the external change proves that the inward one must have taken place long before, and while it was most strenuously disavowed.

In Gilbert White's "Natural History of Selbourne," he mentions the curious circumstance, that an aged Willow-tree was, one morning, to the surprise of the neighbours, found to have disappeared from the spot where it had been growing over night—its place being occupied by a flourishing Ash. The fact was, the ash had grown in the centre of a decayed pollard-willow till its roots reached the ground ; and then it grew with great luxuriance, encased in the willow, till it swelled to such a size that one night it burst the crust of the old tree, threw down the fragments, and stood forth as a new tree. But all the beholders must have known full well that a good-sized tree could not have *grown up* in a single night, but must have been growing long since *under cover* of the other tree. And those of them who were curious in such matters probably examined other pollard-willows in the neighbourhood, to see whether some of them might not be hollow at heart, and nourishing other trees within them.

A suspicion corresponding to this naturally and fairly arises in one's mind towards those members (as yet) of our Church who advocate the very principles of the men who have so suddenly deserted the Communion to which, up to the very last moment, they professed themselves so earnestly devoted ;—of those who have so quickly and so completely thrown off the *shell*,

as it were, of Protestantism; and have at length stood forth openly as what they must have long been secretly.

To trust fully to the sincerity of the members of such a party would be perfect infatuation. Yet a character for sincerity is absolutely needed for success by those Factors for Rome, who still remain amongst us, apparently with the object, and certainly with the effect, of daily transferring numbers to the Roman Communion, which they cautiously abstain from joining themselves. And as these are, by far, our most dangerous enemies, it is of the utmost importance that their true principles should be fully known, and their conduct placed in its true light. They remind one of Charon, in the old Mythology, that "grim ferryman whom poets write of," continually ferrying over multitudes across the "melancholy flood," to a gloomy shore, from which he regularly returned himself alone to take in a fresh cargo. It would be much better for mankind if the boat and its "ancient mariner" were once fixed upon either bank of the stream.

But the present danger cannot be sufficiently averted by exciting even the greatest amount of detestation against Tractite artifices, or the utmost of repugnance to Tractite principles; because in every great and stirring movement, there is commonly quite as much danger from a *re-action* as from the direct tendency of the movement itself.

Human society, resembling, as it does, a sea that is subject to tides, requires allowance to be made not only for the current which is actually flowing, but for that which is to succeed. The thoughtless multitude, who are ready followers of each prevailing fashion, resemble floating planks which drift to and fro with each flux and reflux of the tide. A mariner of the smallest degree of prudence, will, on perceiving that the tide which sets at the present moment is driving him out of his true course, exert himself by sails or oars to counteract its force. But if he think only of this, making allowance solely for the existing tide, and none for that which is to succeed, he will find his vessel eventually carried away from its right course, even through his own efforts to preserve it.

In reality, Tractism itself was—we are persuaded—in its origin, a *reaction* from excesses in an opposite direction; and there is too much reason to apprehend that its effect upon many

minds will be to drive them back into similar, or even worse excesses.

We could not, therefore, carry out completely the design of these Cautions without noticing the indirect as well as the direct tendency of that movement, and guarding you against the *rebound* as well as against the *shock*. For, our design never was to serve or please any party in the Church or State; but to set plainly before you all the dangers on every side of our present position, and the best way of securing yourselves against them. And this design we must prosecute, without fear or favour, as God shall give us strength and opportunity, whether it require us to expose the faults of the Tractites or of their opponents.

Many indeed—we doubt not—will be apt to give very different advice. “At *any other time*,” they will say—“expose the faults of the opponents of Tractism, but not *now*. Do not strengthen the common enemy by laying bare the errors of those who are willing to act as your allies. Do not drive away in disgust those who are zealous in opposing so great an evil.”

And this truly is the policy generally adopted in such cases:—to form a coalition with *any* who will but fight in our ranks, with whatever weapons they may chuse to fight;—to wink at all faults in confederates,—and to let a “common cause” sanctify everything and everybody.

Yet such conduct as this is even bad worldly policy. And such Luther—you may remember—perceived it to be, when he called on all men to put down the outrageous fanaticism of the Anabaptists. *They* had, in some sense, a common cause with the great Reformer. He and they had a common enemy in Rome. Nor were there wanting, then, advisers who counselled him to let those men alone, and suffer them to do the rough work in their own rough way. But he saw well enough what strength it added to the Romanists to be able to say, “See what excesses men fall into when once they throw off the yoke of our church!” And, in the same way, it is the constant and most efficient topic of the Tractites to confound *all* who oppose them with the wildest pretenders to self-ordination, and with contemners of all church-government, and all decency and all morality. To censure, then, extravagancies in the opposite

quarter from Tractism, is not to strengthen the Tractites, but to cut the ground from under them. To connive at, or to spare such extravagancies, *this* is to strengthen the Tractites, and to weaken materially the cause of Truth. If Scylla and Charybdis are not *both* laid down, there is a double danger;—(1) That some voyagers will run upon Scylla; and (2) That others will represent you as doing so whenever you warn them against Charybdis.

One of the commonest arts, indeed, of those engaged in the defence of error, is to represent their opponents as maintaining the opposite errors. And this is the easier, because, in fact, it will often happen that it shall be no misrepresentation; nothing being more common than for an eager disputant to overstate his own doctrine in his zeal against that which he is combating; and thus unconsciously to be hurried by his own impetuosity into the contrary extreme. And, again, however groundless in any instance such a charge may be, much blame will still attach to those who heedlessly lay themselves open to it, and are not constantly watchful to “abstain from all appearance of evil.” We cannot, indeed, exercise too sedulous a vigilance on this point, since we are all so apt, when warmly engaged in controversy, to lose sight for the moment of everything except the matter in debate—to think of nothing but proving our present point—and to resort to every means of accomplishing the purpose we have in hand; regardless of the future mischiefs which may arise, in a different quarter, from the errors to which we may have unconsciously been giving countenance. But when we thus give way to a controversial spirit we seem to violate the command given to the Israelites, in their sieges, not to cut down trees which afford food for man, to construct their warlike engines; but to keep sacred from the ravages of war, what would be useful in the future days of peace.*

The natural tendency of all men, when disgusted with the extravagances of one extreme, to rush into the opposite, is to be counteracted by constantly keeping in mind, that when any error or absurdity becomes prevalent, there is a very strong presumption at least that it must owe that prevalence, in part, to some admixture of truth and reason. And in fact the *more* unreasonable and extravagant any system may be, the stronger.

* See Deut. xx. 19, 20.

is the presumption that this absurdity must be blended with something just and rational which gives it currency. We must be careful therefore not to cast away the gold with the dross; but diligently to ascertain, and carefully to separate and preserve, whatever is valuable in the mass.

2. And hence arises another rule, of very high importance, which is too frequently overlooked; that, instead of abstaining from all mention of such important doctrines as have been the most perverted and abused—or regarding them with suspicion, and touching but slightly on them, as *dangerous* in their tendency, we should be, on that very account, the more diligent and constant in enforcing them. The great doctrines of justification by faith, and of spiritual influence, afford a most remarkable instance to illustrate what has been said. How absurdly and how mischievously they have been perverted by enthusiasts, is but too well known; and it is to be feared that many, who are far from rejecting those doctrines, have yet been thus led to regard them as unsafe, and, in their teaching, to keep them very much in the back-ground. Whereas they ought for this very reason to teach them the more assiduously; not only because the neglect is no less an evil than the abuse, of them, but because the very best security against that abuse is to preach the doctrines rationally, in their genuine and uncorrupted form.* Indeed the champions of truth may derive from the advocates of error many a useful lesson for counteracting the progress of that error, if they will but study to imitate whatever there is of good in the system of their opponents, while they avoid the evil.

It is not enough, then, to act upon the trite familiar rule of guarding especially against that extreme which on each occasion, or in each place, you find men especially liable to; but you must remember, at the same time, this other caution, not less important and far more likely to be overlooked—to guard against a tendency to a *reaction*:—against the proneness of men to rush from one extreme into the opposite.

* In the vast savannahs of America, travellers are often, it is said, threatened with destruction from fires, which having been kindled by some accident, among the luxuriant but sun-scorched vegetation, spread, before the wind, with a rapidity which precludes all hope of escape by flight. Their only resource, when thus pursued by the conflagration, is to kindle the grass *before* them, and thus leave the flame which follows them no fuel to sustain it. An analogous expedient to this may, in many cases, prove equally successful.

When we are warned, for instance, to inculcate the insufficiency of mere outward observances, and adherence to Church-regulations, on those who are disposed to overrate externals,—to prize the means of grace above the end,—and whose tendency is towards formalism,—and to impress earnestly on such persons the necessity of a christian influence operating on the heart and life;—and when again we are told to caution those who have an opposite tendency, against disregard of Ordinances, contempt of legitimate Church-authority, and a disposition to walk disorderly;—when these and such like cautions to counteract the prevailing errors of each time and place, are suggested, it is impossible to deny the justness, or the practical importance, of the principle inculcated.

But if we stop there,—if we take no precaution against those errors also which are *opposite* to such as are, on each occasion, the most prevalent, we may be even preparing the way to a dangerous reaction. For since almost every erroneous system contains truth blended with falsehood, hence, its tendency usually is, first, to recommend the falsehood on account of the truth combined with it, and afterwards, to bring the truth into contempt or odium on account of the intermixture of falsehood.

In no point is the record of past times more instructive to those capable of learning from other experience than their own, than in what relates to the history of *reactions*.

We find alternate movements, in nearly opposite directions, taking place from time to time, and generally bearing some proportion to each other in respect of the violence of each; even as the highest flood-tide is succeeded by the lowest ebb.

We find,—in the case of political affairs,—that the most servile submission to privileged classes, and the grossest abuses of power by these, have been the precursors of the wildest ebullitions of popular fury,—of the overthrow indiscriminately of ancient institutions, good and bad, and of the most turbulent democracy; generally proportioned, in its extravagance and violence, to the degree of previous oppression and previous degradation. And again, we find that whenever men have become heartily wearied of licentious anarchy, their eagerness has been proportionably great to embrace the opposite extreme

of rigorous despotism; like shipwrecked mariners clinging to a bare and rugged rock as a refuge from the waves.

And when we look to the history of *religious* changes, the prospect is similar. The formalism, the superstition, and the priestcraft which prevailed for so many ages throughout Christendom, led, in many instances, by a natural reaction, to the wildest irregularities of fanaticism or profaneness. We find antinomian licentiousness in some instances the successor of the pretended merit of what were called "good works;" in others, the rejection altogether of the Christian Sacraments succeeding the superstitious abuse of them: the legitimate claims of every visible Church utterly disowned by the descendants of those who had groaned under a spiritual tyranny; pretensions to individual personal inspiration set up by those who had revolted from that tyranny; and in short every variety of extravagance that was most contrasted with the excesses and abuses that had before prevailed.

And again each extravagance of doctrine or of practice thus introduced, will be found, on careful examination, to have led the way, when it has prevailed to a great excess and for a considerable time, to another reaction, back, towards something like the former extremes.

And whoever takes a survey of any considerable portions of the history of mankind will, we think, be more and more impressed the more extensively and the more carefully he pursues the study, with the expectation that such oscillations (if we may so speak) are always from time to time to be looked for; though with greater or less violence, and somewhat varied in character, according to circumstances; and that every prevailing error tends to produce, sooner or later, a corresponding reaction.

Now we are persuaded—as we have already said—that the Tract-movement was, in its origin, a *reaction*, partly from loose notions of church-authority—partly from a teaching essentially Antinomian—partly from secret infidelity widely spread—partly from fanatical claims to personal inspiration. And the same causes which gave rise to the movement continue still, to some extent, to further it; while again it may be expected that, unless

some strenuous efforts are made to prevent so fatal a consequence, that this movement will end in bringing back, even more extensively than before, the very evils which it aimed at remedying.

As matters stand at present, those who are alarmed at anarchy and confusion and party strife in the Church, and yet can see no principles, at once sound and moderate, upon which to base such a church-authority as will afford a reasonable safeguard against those evils, are thrown, by a strong revulsion from what now most terrifies them, into Tractite-principles, as promising at least a security which they feel themselves in want of. But many of these very persons will, no doubt, soon find that in flying from such danger into the Tractite-system, they have exposed themselves to worse evils than they sought to avoid; and it is to be feared that the effect of such a discovery will be, in too many cases, to make these men despair entirely of peace and good order in the Church, and fling themselves back again with a hearty goodwill into the excesses which formerly excited their disgust. For, those excesses will then be regarded as the inevitable alternative of a rejection of spiritual despotism. They will be viewed no longer as they are in themselves, but as contrasted with the odious system to which they stand opposed; and they will appear tolerable, if not quite harmless, as compared with that.

And the same may be said of all the other excesses from which Tractism was a revulsion.

It will be useful then for us to take a view of the state of things in the Church previous to the rise of Tractism, and see whether we cannot there trace the causes which produced so powerful a *reaction*, and whether also those same causes are not still operating amongst many who are some of its most vehement opponents. Now this we intend to make the subject of some following Cautions, which we hope soon to lay before you.

But, in the meanwhile, let us once more earnestly warn you against making mere opposition to Tractism the rallying point of a Party; as if it were a matter of small consequence with what views, or on what principles, Tractism is opposed, so as that it is but opposed heartily and with ability.

After all that we have said, you will not suspect us of being

lukewarm in the cause, or insensible to the reality or the greatness of the danger which impends from that quarter. But our zeal against Tractism has not made us blind to other dangers; and the danger of an utter destruction of the present framework of our Church is not the least amongst these.

Now we fear that there are some who, while they foresee the likelihood of such an event, yet hardly regard it as a *danger* of sufficient magnitude to check them in taking any measures which may seem fit for opposing Tractism for the moment. They say to themselves, "Let the Church perish, so as the truth of the Gospel is maintained!" And, to be sure, if the question were between maintaining the truth of the Gospel, on the one side, and sacrificing the present constitution of the Church on the other, every Christian, who deserved the name, would be ready to make that or even a still greater sacrifice. But the question really is,—are we taking the wisest measures for securing ourselves not only against the present evil of Tractism; but against that *and other evils*, if we thus sacrifice our present constitution, and run all risks of revolutionary violence? Members of a congregation, for example, who are disgusted by the offensive peculiarities of a Tractite Pastor, set over them by the law of the land, may indeed escape that evil, by withdrawing from the parish church, and choosing for themselves a teacher after their own minds to officiate in a meeting-house. But then they will be placing themselves, on the other hand, under all the evils of the voluntary system. *They*, the very persons least likely to be seriously *injured* by Tractite teaching, because the persons most *offended* by it, will be withdrawing all their weight and influence from the parish congregation, and leaving the careless, the wavering, and the doubtful, entirely in the hands of the corruptor, and allowing him the opportunity of branding them as schismatics, and of holding up the views which they maintain, as essentially opposed (by their own confession) to all church-principles. And, if a general secession of this kind takes place throughout England, it will amount to an abandonment of all the present machinery and influence of the Established Church into the hands of the Tractites, on the one side; and on the other, the creation either of a set of broken and disjointed congregations, without any common rule and discipline, or of some new Church, in which it is impossible to

predict what violent and tyrannical party may not soon get the upper hand. For, it is too often a violent and tyrannical party which does seize the government in the crisis of a revolution; especially where no deliberate measures have been taken beforehand to guard against anarchy, and where the change is made suddenly and under the influence of exasperated feelings.

Think, then, not only of what you may be running *from*, but of what you may be running *towards*; and whatever you do, do it calmly, and with the whole state of the case before you.

In the Established Church you are sure, at any rate, of a scriptural and sober Liturgy, in which all can join; and of a continual protest against human errors, borne by the inspired Writers themselves, in that regular course of Bible-Lessons which form so important a part of our public Service. And, though some of its authorized teachers may, we fear, be more or less tainted, yet, we trust, the great Body of them are sound; and that sound majority must, sooner or later, recover all the ground that has been lost, if they do not rashly abandon the field, and take up a new, and far less advantageous position, as the ministers of a separate Communion. But there never was a time when the Church could less afford the loss of men of sound Protestant-principles. "Except these abide in the ship," the vessel cannot be saved. But if they will remain among us, and exert themselves, not only strenuously but discreetly, to stem the present tide,—which after all, like other tides, has its hour of ebbing—there is every reason to think that the prevalent errors may be resisted much better from within the Church than from outside it.

Schism is, indeed, in all such cases, the remedy that should be resorted to, *last*, and only when all other means have been tried to the utmost, and found ineffectual. A separation, when it is not absolutely forced upon men, by others requiring something of them contrary to their conscience, but is made merely in the hope of *bettering* the constitution under which they had lived, carries in itself the fruitful source of infinite new divisions. The proposed improvements will seem, after a while, to some, to go too far—to others, not far enough; parties will spring up, calling for fresh reforms of every altered model; and those who cannot persuade the rest to agree with them, will

colour their separation from their brethren with the same plea as seemed to all to justify the original schism.

But many, when some immediate good result seems attainable by an irregular movement, overlook entirely the pernicious *principle* which may be affirmed by such a movement. Many will feel themselves justified in withdrawing from the ministrations of their lawful Pastor, if they think them dull or unedifying, and in seeking one who will please them better; without considering that such an act involves in it the principle—that the congregation may chuse their own Teacher, and discard him at pleasure. Many will urge the introduction of some unauthorized and extemporary prayers into the public Service, which *they* consider profitable to devotion; without considering that, if *they* are to be allowed such a privilege, *others*, of very different sentiments must be allowed the same. Many will omit or alter the prescribed forms of Worship, because repugnant to their own peculiar tastes, without reflecting upon the licence which they thus implicitly accord, to persons whom they would be themselves the first to censure for taking advantage of it, and for entering by the very door which has thus been opened for them. Thus it has come to pass that too many of the opponents of Tractism have placed themselves in a false position, and are fighting against it, as it were, with only one hand, when both should be employed. They may, indeed, be dealing hard blows against it in the way of assault, but they are unable to ward off the strokes which its skilful champions aim dexterously at the inconsistency of its assailants. Even for the sake, then, of guarding against this single evil of Tractism effectually, it would be well worth our while to point out the errors which have been, and are likely to be, committed by its opponents. For, the mistakes of its own officers may be just as disastrous to an army, as the skill or courage of the enemy.

July, 1852.

No. XX.

“That dirt made this dust.”

Ray's Proverbs.

SOME, perhaps after reading our last Caution, may be apt to say, “Why is all this stir made about *reactions*? It is manifest that *all* religious error cannot be the result of reaction from opposite error; since, if so, religious error could never have had a beginning in the Church.”

“The Gospel,” they will, perhaps, go on to remark, “was certainly first preached in perfect purity by the Apostles, without any excess or defect; and, therefore, the *first* corruptions of it could not have been *reactions* from other corruptions, but must have sprung immediately from the corrupt soil of human nature. Now Tractite errors may have sprung up in just the same way, and might have run just the same course as they have run, whether there had been any contrary errors previously prevailing or not. It is, therefore, to say the least, superfluous to spend time in considering what the state of things was before the Tractites appeared, since it cannot be proved that the opposite errors then prevailing—if any such did prevail—were in any way connected with the rise and progress of Tractism.”

Such objections as these will not improbably be made; but we think that they cannot be made reasonably. We certainly never meant to say, or to imply, that *all* corruptions of the truth originate in reaction from opposite corruptions: but we said—and we seem to ourselves to have proved—that reaction is *a* cause of error; that the *tendency* of excess in one direction is always to produce excess in another;—that if errors opposite to Tractism did prevail formerly, they must have *tended* to produce Tractism;—and that, wherever they prevail still, they must tend to strengthen or reproduce that, or something of the same kind; and that, consequently, if we would really cut off the sources of

danger in this case, we should be watchful not only against Tractite,* but against anti-Tractite errors.

To say, then, that for aught we know, Tractism might have sprung up and grown just as it has, whether opposite errors had prevailed or not, is to say what possibly may be true (though it is not at all likely), but what is certainly not quite pertinent to the matter in hand. Contagious diseases must, doubtless, sometimes originate without contagion; for, otherwise, how could they have *first originated* at all? and many maladies run a course marked from the beginning with all the worst possible symptoms, in spite of the greatest care and the most judicious treatment. But are we, therefore, to conclude that contagion is no cause of disease, and that neglect and mismanagement do not aggravate its symptoms, and increase the danger of a fatal termination? Since the plague may visit us, notwithstanding all the precautions of our quarantine, and (if it does) the patients may die, whether they are cared for or neglected, should we therefore be acting wisely in unloading a bale of infected goods from the Levant at the Tower-stairs or St. Paul's-wharf; and then when the pestilence began to spread, leaving its victims to perish without nurses or medical aid, comforting ourselves all the while with the reflection that all this might have happened (which is certainly *possible*) just the same under any circumstances?

No doubt the first corruptions of christian doctrine were not reactions from opposite errors. This is a very obvious truth, and one which in no way concerned our immediate purpose either to remark or to deny. But if we look back upon the history of the early Church with a sincere desire to make it profitable to ourselves, we shall not fail to observe farther, that the very earliest corruptions of Christianity did soon produce other opposite corruptions in the way of reaction. It has been often remarked by geographers that a river flowing through a level country of soft alluvial soil never keeps a straight course, but winds regularly to and fro, in the form of the letter [S] many times repeated. And a geographer, on looking at the course of any stream as

* Certain persons, we understand, have severely censured this word, on grammatical grounds, as a flagrant breach of analogy: which (they say) would require "Tractarian." But the objectors themselves hardly talk of "Foxarians" and "Pittarians;" and most of them have probably heard of the *Karaites* among the Jews; and some of them, perhaps, of the *Shiites* and *Sonnites* among the Mahometans.

marked on a map, can at once tell whether it flows along a plain (like the river *Meander*, which has given its name to such windings) or through a rocky and hilly country. It is found, indeed, that if a straight channel be cut for any stream in a plain consisting of tolerably soft soil, it never will long continue straight, unless artificially kept so, but becomes crooked, and increases its windings more and more every year. The cause is, that any little wearing away of the bank in the softest part of the soil, on one side, occasions a *set* of the stream against this hollow, which increases it, and at the same time drives the water aslant against the opposite bank a little lower down. This wears away that bank also; and thus the stream is again driven against a part of the first bank, still lower; and so on, till by the wearing away of the banks at these points on each side, and the deposit of mud (gradually becoming dry land) in the comparatively still water between them, the course of the stream becomes sinuous, and its windings increase more and more.

Now, this process is precisely analogous to what takes place in human affairs, which present, as we have said, a series of reactions. A small deviation from the straight course on one side, tends to produce an opposite (and perhaps a somewhat greater) deviation, some time after, on the opposite side; and that, again, another, opposed to it; and so on without end, except where *due care is taken* to check these deviations on each side. And the history of the christian Church furnishes many examples of this. The Judaising teachers, for example, brought the source of their error with them into the Church; but the natural consequences of that error soon developed themselves in the way of reaction. The *Gnostics*, as they were called, soon rushed into the contrary extreme, denying that the Law was ever given by God, and throwing off entirely the yoke of moral obligation as well as of ceremonial ordinances. And the consequence of this again was that by the end of the first century, the Churches were in such a state of disorder and insubordination, that the bishops and clergy thought they could never do enough to consolidate their authority; and so they very soon did too much; by establishing, in the end, a sacerdotal hierarchy, and a ceremonial religion once more.

Now, may we not be permitted to say that "these things happened to them for our ensamples?" And should we not take

warning by the experience of our predecessors? May not Tractism, like ancient Legalism, produce by reaction, Antinomian errors in doctrine, or lawless anarchy in practice? And may not these abuses, in their turn, reproduce Tractism as their result?

"But granting"—it will be said—"that there is some such danger as you speak of, still no one who writes on any subject is bound to treat of *every possible* error relative to it. Now the prevailing tendency, at least at present, is not towards the errors opposed to Tractism, but towards Tractism itself. Now, therefore, is the time for straining every nerve against Tractism. When that is crushed, and opposite errors begin to prevail, then check them also in their turn. But the time for rousing men to guard against an error, is when the tendency towards it is strong and general."

We answer,—it is certainly high time to notice an error when it is widely prevalent; but it is time to notice it also when the opposite prevails. Bacon set himself with all his might to oppose the *sophistical* philosophy of his own day; but he did not fail, at the same time, to utter a prophetic warning against the *empirical* philosophy which was likely to spring up as a reaction from it.

Nor is the exposure of the errors of those who are themselves opposing error, any weakening of the cause of truth in the long run, but very much the reverse. The Romanists, for example, and the Reformers, were so far on the same side, that they were both opposed to Mahometism and to infidelity. And, therefore, many were probably displeased *then*—and many have wondered since—that the Reformers should have weakened—(as it seems to such persons they did)—the ranks of the Church, by exposing the errors,—and often what might appear mere speculative errors,—of Christians; instead of forgetting all differences amongst brethren in one common warfare against a common foe.

But *were*, therefore, the pains which the Reformers took to refute, for example, what might seem at first sight the comparatively unimportant speculative error of transubstantiation, pains misspent, and time and attention wasted?—No. As Paley truly remarks, "they did great service in freeing Christianity from a weight which sunk it." And if the French Reformers, for instance, had succeeded in freeing the popular creed in their

Country from this and similar weights, it is quite possible that Voltaire and other eminent men, instead of spurning Christianity (which they confounded with Romanism) as a mass of absurdities, and a barrier to human progress, might have exerted all their powers and influence in defending and adorning it. For all admixture of truth with error has a double danger: some admit both together; others reject both.

Now, just as the absurdities of Romanism drove the French philosophers of the eighteenth century into infidelity, and the absurdities and discomfort of infidelity have driven many of their disciples back again to Romanism; so, the errors taught by the Tractites, while infecting some, drive others to dread or despise the very name of a "Church," or Church-principles, or rule, or order, or ceremonies, or moderation, or even Christianity. And then the extravagances into which men run, when they have rejected everything that the Tractites have abused, drive them back to the very errors from which they had over-violently recoiled. For, if you spring too high or too far, you will come tumbling to the ground again. Accordingly, you will probably have observed that, though the Tractites are continually talking of the danger of Infidelity and Fanaticism, they seldom show any disposition to grapple with either of them, directly. Their *arguments* are chiefly little more than attempts to show that there is no medium between their own system, and Fanaticism on the one side, or Infidelity on the other. But, as to those two extremes themselves, they seem generally contented to let them alone; being persuaded, doubtless, that neither has in itself any principle of stability, and knowing well that each has proved a kind of seed-plat or nursery for the most thriving plants in their own garden.

Even, then, if our design had been merely to oppose Romanism and Tractism, it would have been needful to notice and disclaim the excesses of their inconsiderate assailants, and to show that our views are not justly chargeable with any of those extravagant consequences which Romanists and Tractites seek to fasten upon all Protestant principles.

But our design, we confess, was never so limited. We intended from the first,—as, from the first, we said pretty plainly,—to warn you, honestly and impartially, against the "dangers of the times;" and that design we still intend to prosecute.

And, since the dangers now impending arise from various and opposite quarters, it will be impossible to prosecute such a design without offending in turn many different parties, and often disgusting and disappointing those who looked on us with favour when we were only attacking their opponents. For every one is naturally pleased to see his adversary rebuked; while no one likes to be touched himself.

If, indeed, we had been weak enough to listen to the reclamations and remonstrances of those who would each persuade us to spare his own party, we should have held our peace entirely, and never molested any one. For each has much to say why *he* should not be censured *alone*. The Romanist might say: "We advance nothing but what follows logically from the teaching of your own Divines. It is very hard that we should be censured for drawing the inference, when they who lay down the premises are unblamed." And they would say that such partial conduct of ours showed plainly that we were angry, not with their principles, but with themselves, and regarded them with animosity, not because they held error, but because they were a rival Church, or connected with some political party which we disliked, and which was hostile to our worldly interests.

The Tractites again might exclaim—"It is hard that *we* should be eternally harassed, whose great fault is that we love law and order too well—at least in theory; while those who systematically set all rules at defiance, and do not even affect the least regard to them, escape without a word of blame. And are we to be blamed for carrying rubrical strictness too far, while others violate the plainest and most express rules with impunity? Are we to be castigated for an over-pious magnifying of the Church's authority, when those who deny its authority altogether meet with no rebuke? It is true some of our adherents have been occasionally inconsistent. But then, in proportion as we are more inconsistent than our adversaries, we are less dangerous. And are we to be severely censured and exposed, for sometimes departing from the rules which we praise in general so highly, and sometimes disobeying the Prelates whom we teach men to reverence so profoundly, while you have nothing to say against those who despise not only the persons, but the very office of their Bishops, and not only 'break' the Church's laws, but 'teach men so?'"

If, indeed, we were desirous of human favour and popularity, we should try to stand well at least with *one* party. But, after all, the approbation of those already convinced, and their joining in the censure of those they are opposed to, is no great triumph, if they are prepared to reject all that applies to themselves. And it is more really honourable, as well as better in itself, to benefit even a few, than to gain the applause of multitudes. Nor are the persons likely to be benefited, by being told of their own as well as of their neighbour's faults, so very few as might appear. For though perhaps not one in ten is *at once* convinced of any error of his own, or embraces any truth he had not been used to, *just at first*, we may hope that *in time* well-established facts and strong reasons will prevail. But if any one is disposed to measure the wisdom and rectitude of whatever is written or said, by the degree of immediate favour, and wide-spread sudden popularity, which it obtains,—let any such person look to the example of our blessed Saviour's teaching. No one, we conceive, can doubt that his discourses would have been much more acceptable, and that He would have avoided much of the displeasure they excited, if He had set forth to each sort of audience such truths only as they were most disposed to receive, and had dwelt, to each, chiefly on the errors of some other party. If in speaking to the Pharisees, He had confined himself to the refutation of the error of the Sadducees in denying a resurrection, and, in addressing Sadducees, had dwelt on the absurdity of the traditions of the elders;—if He had spoken to the Jews in censure of the Samaritan Temple on Mount Gerizim, and to the Samaritans, in censure of Jewish bigotry and narrow-mindedness,—if such had been his procedure, no doubt He would, at first at least, have found readier listeners than He did. But He adopted the opposite course, of cautioning each set of hearers against such errors as each were the most liable to. To the Sadducees He expounded a passage of Scripture which they had overlooked; and to the Pharisees He pointed out how their traditions had made God's Word of none effect. When asked by a Jew what he meant by a "neighbour," He chuses for his example an alien and a schismatic,—a Samaritan. And to the woman of Samaria He sets forth the superior correctness of the Jewish worship.

It is for us to follow his example, and to entrust ourselves to

his Providence; "not as men-pleasers,"* but "keeping back nothing that is profitable"† to the hearers. And we may look forward with patience to the time when hostile prejudice will soften down, and truth and reason will gradually work their way.

And they will work their way the more easily if we are always careful to discriminate what is really objectionable in the opinions and conduct of those whom we seek to correct, from other things, accidentally blended with their faults and errors, though in themselves innocent or even laudable.‡ "Pure and unmixed error," it has been truly said, "does not readily find a place in the mind of man. Falsehood gains its acceptance by being artfully mixed up with truth, and in consequence receiving the assent and reverence which is only due to the truth. Now the only hopeful way of converting a man thus mistaken is, if we are able, to separate this combination; if we unravel the intricate web in which truth and falsehood have been woven together; if we can clearly reply to our opponent,—So much of what you say is true, but it is irrelevant; for it is admitted, and its importance acknowledged by us as well as you; the rest of what you say is false, and cannot be shown to follow from those doctrines which we agree in admitting. But now, if there be any truths which we neglect or dislike, and on which we do not willingly allow our minds to dwell, it happens that we do not readily recognise the truth of these doctrines when presented to us in the arguments of our opponents, and thus that we are incompetent to perform that analysis of a combination of truth and falsehood on which the refutation of a sophism usually depends. I may add, that much of the loss of temper which occurs in controversy may be attributed to ill success in detecting the fallacy of arguments felt to be unsound, and yet not shown to be so. When we can see exactly the cause of our opponents' mistakes, when we can discern what is the truth their reverence for which induces them to embrace the falsehoods which in their minds are united with it, but which *we* can see have no connexion with it,—in this case the emotion commonly felt is, perhaps, some sense of the ridiculous, but chiefly, calm pity for

* 1 Thess. ii. 4.

† Acts, xx. 20.

‡ See an excellent Sermon on "Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth," by Rev. George Salmon, F.T.C.D. London: Rivington. Dublin: Hodges and Smith. 1852.

those unable to pierce the cloud of error in which we see them involved. But when we fail to discern the exact flaw in our opponent's reasonings, our feelings are seldom so tranquil. The more completely we are convinced of the falsity of his conclusions, the more annoyance we are likely to feel at the apparent soundness of the reasonings by which they are supported; all the unpleasant emotions are excited which the exposure of inferiority, or the baffling of any of our attempts, is accustomed to raise, and this very discomposure of mind makes us still more unfit than we had been before, for the task of cool and accurate reasoning. It is on this account that in so many controversies we see both parties spend their time in producing positive arguments in support of their own conclusions, and paying but little attention to the refutation of their adversaries' arguments; while each, conscious that his own argument has not been replied to, is apt to become angry with the obstinacy and prejudice of his opponent in refusing to be convinced by arguments which he cannot confute."

Now, in conformity with this prudent advice, we would intreat both parties—the extreme high, and the extreme low-church, as they are called—to give their patient attention to our next Caution. We would invite them to a kind of conference, and respectfully offer our assistance for bringing such of them as may be disposed towards peace, to a better understanding. We think it not unlikely that, if they will lay prejudice and angry feelings aside, each will be apt to find some truths in what the others hold, and be induced to abandon some exaggerated views of their own. Let well-intentioned men on both sides compare their opinions, in a friendly, candid spirit; and the congenial elements of truth, that have been long violently separated, will enter into combination, and precipitate (as it were) the foreign matter with which they have been blended.

We are of course well aware that, when two parties are engaged in a vehement dispute, the obvious and short way to obtain at least some degree of favour, is, to agree fully with one of them, and to pronounce unqualified censure on the other. You will probably displease the most vehement disputants on both sides, if you partly agree and partly disagree with each; and still more, if you point out to them that they are nearer to an agreement with each other than they themselves perceive, and

that a portion of the dispute is merely *verbal*, arising from the use of certain words in different senses, by the respective parties. But in proportion as men's excited feelings become calmer, and they come to reflect carefully on what has been laid before them, they will gradually adopt—when there is good reason for it—more moderate views, and will be better prepared to do justice to a mediator.

For ourselves, we would most earnestly and sincerely disclaim all bitter hostility towards either party. Many good men, we have no doubt have a leaning towards Tractite views; and many good men also towards the opposite extreme. And we should be deeply grieved if either of these were hurt or offended by anything we have said, or shall say, in censuring the excesses of the parties with which they are more or less connected. Let them reflect that, if we had not been convinced that there were persons in each party who were not irrevocably committed to such principles and practices as we have been exposing, we should never have written to warn them. For the good old maxim of Medicine tells us that “Remedies cannot act upon a corpse.”*

But we have little doubt that many, on both sides, have taken up *extreme* principles, for the sake of supporting only what is truly needful or valuable;—from failing to perceive that there are safer and more moderate principles which would afford a truer and firmer basis for everything that is really worth preserving. Such persons do not recognise, and are not fairly to be charged with, the pernicious consequences of the principles they hold, since they hold those principles merely as the foundation of things which they see plainly to be necessary or desirable, and for which they cannot see any better foundation.

Many, for example, have notions of Church-authority and of apostolic succession, such as do, in reality, lead to conclusions they themselves dream not of, and would repudiate, but which they hold tenaciously, from being persuaded that church-authority itself, and the just privileges of the clerical Order, cannot be maintained without them. And even the “Double Doctrine” (though we have felt bound to expose the dishonesty of those who have avowed their own insincerity), is yet what some sincere men have adopted in a modified form, from not perceiving what

* Remedia non agunt in cadaver.

it really amounts to, and from fancying that it is essentially the same as *Gradual Teaching*.

Let each party, then, instead of contenting themselves with declaiming against the opposite errors (which may lead some to infer that *both* are wrong, and that, consequently, *all* Christians are wrong, and no truth in Christianity), endeavour to lay down *positively*, in a spirit of calm conciliation, what they think can be best established as essential, and what points they can concede to opponents; both parties keeping carefully clear of those errors which we have plainly pointed out, and proved to be such.

All Christians who are such in sincerity, should remember that they have a common cause to maintain against irreligion; and though this should not prevent us from pointing out the errors of our fellow-Christians, yet it should certainly influence *the manner* of our doing so. The high and the low-Churchman (as they are called) should remember that each has many anti-Christians on his side, as far as opposition to the respectively opposed christian parties is concerned. And though any truth is not less a truth when urged by an infidel, yet we should be careful not to join with him in attacking an adversary's position without showing at the same time that we *have* a position of our own quite tenable; and that, if our opponents had only maintained what was necessary for the defence of Christianity, or was a just consequence of its real doctrines, the objections which we and the infidel now urge in common, would not have lain.

And so, also, in the case of arguments which we urge in common with Dissenters from our Church, it is incumbent upon us to take all fair opportunities of showing not only that our objections *do* lie against the tenets of our opponents, but also that they do *not* lie against the doctrine and constitution of our Church, as rightly understood. Not, indeed, that we are bound to maintain that there is no *imperfection* in our Church; but that we are deeply interested to prove that it has no *such* faults to answer for as may be found in the Tractite-system. Let us, then, never forget that in these unhappy differences we and our opponents are brethren, the sons of the same mother. Let us reflect on "the great danger we are in by our unhappy divisions," and let us consider not only how any present defects may be remedied in future, but how far also it may be needful

patiently to bear with them until the remedy can be safely applied.

It is obviously a duty, and an advantage, for the members of *any* society, under all circumstances,—more especially for the Clergy of a christian Church, and most of all when that Church is so situated as ours is at present,—to live in harmony—to assist each other—to act in concert as much as possible—and to co-operate as *one* united Body, guided by the same principles, and conforming to the same regulations.

All would probably admit this in the abstract; and all would perhaps be ready to act on that admission, in the case of any community—could there be any such—whose constitution and whose governors should not only *be*, but should *appear* to every individual member of that community,—so perfect as to admit of no conceivable improvement. But this we know to be an impossibility. For even if a system absolutely perfect could be established,—which none could be, subsequent to the removal of the Apostles,—the inspired and unerring founders and governors of the earliest christian Churches,—still, as we learn from the experience of what took place, even in the times of those very Apostles, many would be found disposed to “walk disorderly,” and disregard its regulations.

But in our Church (as in any other community whose regulations are framed by fallible mortals) it is not pretended that all its enactments are, even in themselves, so perfect as to preclude all possibility of improvement.

Let it be considered, then, what is the duty of individuals who are members of *such* a community;—of individuals situated, as every member of *any* church must, more or less, be situated, as long as Man shall continue fallible, and the institutions of human wisdom fall short of unerring perfection. Shall we openly withdraw from the community we belong to, on the ground of its not realizing those ideas of perfection which no constitution that is, in any degree, of man's framing, ever can realize? Or shall we,—though not avowedly yet virtually,—withdraw from it, by taking no part, and manifesting no interest in its common concerns, till everything that seems to us an imperfection shall have been completely remedied? Or again, shall we exert ourselves indeed in promoting the objects proposed, but exert ourselves either singly as insulated individuals, or in

irregular combinations, setting at nought the institutions and regulations of the community, and in defiance of its legitimate governors? In all these ways, it is manifest we should be professing concord and church-unity, in words, while we were destroying it by our conduct. We should be maintaining a mere nominal and *hypothetical* kind of christian harmony; to be then only displayed in practice when every part of the constitution of the Church should be modelled precisely according to our own judgment and our own wishes.

Far different surely is the wise policy, and (what in this case comes to the same point) the bounden duty, of each member of any community—and not least, of each member, more especially each minister, of a Church which he does not deem so radically corrupt in doctrine or in discipline as to oblige him to forsake it. It should be his endeavour, in the first place, to avail himself as far as possible of all its existing regulations and institutions, towards promoting beneficial objects; and in the next place, to do all he can (not only as a single individual, but in combination with his fellow-members of the Church) in furthering those objects, under the control at least, if not with the aid, of the established regulations, and keeping within the bounds which they prescribe. And if in any case the co-operation of other members, and especially of the regular governors of the Church, in any beneficial measure, shall have been sought in vain, we should regard it as a matter of consolation that at least it *has* been *sought*. While we regret the absence of their aid in what we consider a good work, we should secure to ourselves, at least the satisfaction of feeling that the fault, if there be any, rests with them, and not with ourselves.

And if, again, we find in any case our useful exertions apparently crippled by what may seem to us the injudicious regulations of the Society, it is for us to deliberate attentively—to reflect solemnly—*which* is, in such a case, the more advisable and the more justifiable side of the alternative; to forego some advantages, and submit to some inconveniences, in obeying the laws of our society, while they continue to *be* its laws, though they are not such as we fully approve, and though we are taking steps to obtain an alteration of them; or, for the sake of some particular benefit, to violate a general obligation, and thus loosen the whole fabric of the Body of which we are members, by set-

ting an example of irregularity and disunion. For it is evident that to adopt this latter course, is to introduce a principle which each will afterwards apply according to his own discretion, one in one way, and another in another; and which utterly nullifies all professions of allegiance, subordination, and unanimity. Every one must see what an empty name must be that of discipline, in an army of which each soldier should be ready to obey orders only just so far as they might chance to fall in with his own views of what was most advisable, and should violate them without scruple, in compliance with the suggestions of his own judgment. And every one, we may add, must perceive how little, in such an army, would avail the valour and activity of soldiers quitting their ranks at pleasure, and acting, each as his own general, either singly or in small self-formed bodies of irregular volunteers; and what irretrievable confusion and ultimate ruin must be the result.

We will only add one remark to what we have said on this subject; that no one should regard with suspicious aversion that loyal compliance with the subsisting rules of the community, while they continue to *be* its rules, which we have urged as a duty incumbent on all its members,—no one, we say, should regard this with suspicion, as tending to prevent the reformation of defects, and to perpetuate unwise laws. Quite the contrary. Nothing tends more to *prevent* the regular abrogation or alteration of unwise laws, than the irregular infringement or evasion of them. Nothing is more conducive not only to the maintenance of what is good, but also to the amendment of what is evil, in any of our institutions, than a scrupulous conformity to them while they subsist. If every member either of a civil or of an ecclesiastical community would make it a point of conscience both to obey, in each *particular* point, the laws, while they continue to be laws, and also to use his best endeavours in a regular way, for the *general* amendment of anything he might think faulty, the community would gain much, not only in point of healthful firmness and stability, but also in point of susceptibility of growth and improvement.

Unhappily, the conduct of most men is the very reverse of this. Instead of labouring to improve the regular public high-roads, or to amend the direction of them, each is ready to break a path for himself as his own convenience may suggest. If the

inexpediency of any law is pointed out to him, and he is urged, on public grounds, to use his endeavours to procure the regular alteration of it, he will perhaps plead that he is not bound to trouble himself about that which is no special concern of his: and yet the inexpediency of that very law he will perhaps plead as an excuse for the unscrupulous violation of it in any particular case where it may interfere with his private convenience.

The principles which we think ought to be adhered to, in these matters, we propose briefly to sketch out in our next Number.

Sept. 1852.

No. XXI.

"Let not your good be evil spoken of."—Rom. xiv. 16.

WE are far from wishing to assume the character of "Alarmists;" further still from wishing to fill you with despondency; and least of all should we wish to encourage a spirit of universal fault-finding, of cavilling upon small points, or of harshly upbraiding all who disagree with us; but convinced as we are that there are many errors, and errors of very various kinds, afloat in the christian world, we have thought it our duty to *caution* you against being misled into any of them. And without cherishing any feelings of bitter hostility against those who may *honestly* differ from our views, we have felt bound not only to warn you of the artifices of those who, by their own showing, are *not* honest and straightforward in their proceedings, but also to point out what we consider the mistakes,—when they are dangerous mistakes,—of well-intentioned men.

In particular we have judged it needful to caution you,—as in the last two Numbers,—against the error of "mistaking reverse of wrong for right;" and in the eagerness to escape one extreme, rushing hastily into the opposite. For, this is, as we endeavoured to show, an error to which we are always liable, and shall be, as long as human nature has its infirmities and imperfections. It is only natural to feel that a thing cannot be good which we know to have been turned to a bad purpose; and to direct against the thing itself those feelings of dislike and aversion which we entertain against the uses for which it was employed. Thus, we should scarcely like to employ in common use an instrument which had caused the death of a dear friend. So also it is natural to feel especial dread of evils from which we ourselves have once suffered, even though we may be well aware that there is no more real danger to be apprehended from this source than from others at which we feel no alarm. Thus we can understand a man who has suffered extreme hardships from

shipwreck, being unwilling again to go to sea—more unwilling than another equally well aware of the actual amount of the risk, but who has not suffered in his own person ;—and in like manner, we should not wonder at a passenger who has been hurt in a railway collision not liking to set his foot again in a steam-coach. Now in precisely the same way, it is natural that one who has had experience of mischiefs caused to the Church by teachers who exaggerated certain doctrines of the Gospel, and attached undue importance to them, should for his part think it prudent to keep these doctrines in the background, and perhaps come at last to dislike, or even deny them.

Now, we pointed out to you further, in the last Caution, that besides the direct and immediate evil of committing one fault while flying from another, there is also a danger of men's being thus brought back by a fresh reaction into the former error ; and so on, backwards and forwards, without end, like one who is suffering alternately from the hot and cold fits of an ague. If one who attaches disproportionate importance to any christian doctrine is opposed by keeping that doctrine out of sight altogether, you take the very course to confirm your opponent more than ever in his own views. He thinks it more than ever his duty to insist upon that part of the truth which he finds you neglecting : while at the same time, seeing you clearly wrong on one point, he is disposed to distrust *all* your reasonings. Thus while each avoids the ground which he holds in common with the other, the views of both constantly tend to become more and more confined : both come to content themselves with a mutilated Gospel, instead of the comprehensive scheme of truth which God has given us.

We are told in the *Spectator*, that when Sir Roger de Coverley first came to his estate, the good knight found three-parts of his house altogether useless. The best room had the reputation of being haunted ; noises had been heard in another ; and his mother had had several chambers shut up, in which deaths or other disagreeable events had occurred. In this manner his habitation was reduced to so small a compass that he found himself almost shut out of his own house. This story presents itself to our minds when we see men without sufficient reason abandoning part of their rightful possession of christian

doctrine, and confining themselves to a narrow range of Scripture-truth.

We remarked in the former Numbers, that an excessive magnifying of the privileges, offices, and authority of a Church, and the setting-up of that in the place of Scripture, and a superstitious veneration for outward ceremonies, naturally tend to an excessive disregard and disparagement of Church-authority, and to every disorder and irregularity: and again, that extravagant and groundless notions of the supposed merit of good works, have often led to an utter disregard and contempt of moral duty. But we would now add, that there are many who, without falling into these latter extremes themselves, yet by their teaching run a risk of leading others into them. Because there are some who make the Church, and the sacraments, and good works, too prominently or too exclusively the subject of their preaching, *they* never mention them at all; or, if they do touch on them, seem as if they were treading on dangerous ground, which they thought they could not leave too speedily. If they do not shut up these chambers in their house altogether, they appear as if they considered them very unwholesome: as if one could not remain in them too short a time, or get out of them too rapidly. Now after what we have said, you will see why we think we shall be doing good service if we can prove the wholesomeness of the suspected apartments; and we hope to find it more easy to do so, because we have already shown that we are not careless about our own health. Or, to speak in plain words, we expect that what we have already said against the errors of the Tractites will prepare you to give us an unprejudiced hearing while we expose the *opposite* errors, and while we point out those portions of truth which the Tractite-scheme includes. And the more so, as we have endeavoured to prove to you that this part of our task is no less essential to prevent future danger from Tractism than direct refutation of that system. Otherwise, however successful our refutation might be for the present, yet, as we believe this system to have in great measure originated in a reaction against excesses in an opposite direction, so it might be reproduced in the same way again.

We purpose then, in the present Caution, to take up the subject of the Church; and shall first speak of the errors arising

from overlooking the province of a Church in *teaching* the truth. We may then speak of evils resulting from the neglect of Church-discipline and Church-authority in other ways; and may then pass on to speak of other doctrines which many opponents of the Tractites are too apt to "*reserve*."

We have good hope that when moderate and candid men of plain common sense can be brought to confer together, and reflect calmly on these several points on which extremes have taken place, they will before long come to an agreement (or something near an agreement) on all or most of them. Indeed, we are disposed to anticipate that many of our readers may be likely to quarrel with the statements we are about to lay before them, not for being false, but for being truths too familiarly known. When, for instance, it becomes necessary for us to remind them that our Saviour did not design that we should make our way to Heaven, each singly, and without help from others,—that, on the contrary, He has made our welfare in the next world to depend on the assistance of our fellow-creatures in the same manner as does our welfare in this life,—that He has formed his disciples into a society, to which He has promised his constant presence and protection,—that one of the ends for which this society was instituted was the preservation in the world of the truths which He had revealed to it; and that it is not rational to expect that we should attain to religious truth, if we neglect to take advantage of the means with which Christ Himself has provided us,—when, we say, we bring before you such truths as these, we can imagine that some of you may exclaim, "We knew all this before; it was not necessary that you should take the trouble of writing this for us."

We must remind you, however, that it is not enough to guard against erroneous views; we must also beware of incautious language. We have no doubt that many of those whose language on the subject of Good Works we may have occasion to reprehend, are themselves free from any tincture of Antinomianism. And we have no doubt that many of those who contend for "the Scriptures alone," are fully prepared to recognise the proper office of a Church. But it would be a mistake to suppose that because a man's own views are sound, his incautious expressions cannot be mischievous, both to his followers, and to his opponents, and even perhaps to himself. It is true

that, as we remarked in our last Caution, *all* religious error cannot be the result of reaction from opposite error; since, if so, religious error could never have had a beginning. We are persuaded, however, that many such errors *have* originated in reactions, though not against opposite error, yet against careless language which seemed to *imply* an opposite error. Incautious language is, in most cases, the "little wearing away of the bank," which, in the illustration we employed in the last Caution, gives rise to that *set* of the stream, which again produces all the future windings of the river. One who himself holds every part of christian truth, may nevertheless, if he lay especial stress on any one part of it (unless he be very guarded in his language) be supposed by his hearers to undervalue other portions of the truth; and may lead one-half of his hearers to reject these other portions, and the other half (in the way of reaction) to set an undue value on them, and to reject the truth on which he himself had laid stress. And it sometimes happens that one who could at first be charged with nothing but ill-judged language, is then led on, in the heat of argument, or from love of consistency, to accept the consequences which his opponents have drawn from his words; and ends by falling into the very errors which they (at first unjustly) charged him with. You must not suppose, then, that it is waste of time to dwell on truths which we all admit, if there be some persons whose language (or perhaps still oftener whose silence) respecting these truths may lead *others* into error, if not themselves.

To come to the point more immediately before us; perhaps few things will serve better to illustrate the mischiefs which may arise from the use of incautious language, than the manner in which the question has sometimes been discussed, "Whence are we to learn religious truth? from the Scriptures, or from the Church?"

You are aware that Roman-catholics maintain that the Bible is not our sole rule of faith; they hold that the doctrines preached by our Lord and his Apostles are partly contained in the Scriptures, and partly in the writings of Fathers, decrees of Councils, &c. But then, as it is admitted that no one of the Fathers deserves to be implicitly believed in *everything* which he wrote, and as it is acknowledged, moreover, that there were many Councils (attended by a great number of Bishops) which

have decided erroneously, the question arises, how are Christians to distinguish between true and false Councils, between the true and the false statements of Fathers? To this question, the Roman-catholics answer, that God has enabled his Church *infallibly* to make this distinction, and that she has preserved in unbroken tradition the doctrines of the Gospel without any mixture of error. According to this system, then, the individual Christian is not to *go behind* the teaching of the Church. It is true that he may seek for one of her doctrines in Scripture, and not be able to find it there:—but then the Scriptures are said not to contain *all* the doctrines of the Gospel;—and he may also search for the doctrine in the writings of the early Fathers, and not be able to find it there: but then (it is said) he is only a fallible man, liable to be mistaken in his judgment, whereas the Church is infallible, and cannot be mistaken when it declares a doctrine apostolic, even though the early Fathers contain no trace of it. You see then that in the teaching of the Church of Rome, the Church and not the Scripture is that which “maketh wise unto salvation:” while the perusal of the Bible by the people cannot be useful to them, but may be mischievous, by making them doubt the truth of the doctrines which the Church propounds. And you know that accordingly in practice the Church of Rome does very much discourage the reading of the Scriptures by the laity.

Now this single fact—that the claim of infallibility for the Church necessarily makes the Scriptures useless, or rather, dangerous,—is what has led many Protestants to reject the Romish scheme. For they cannot believe that God gave a *revelation* which He intended to be concealed. And it is a historical fact, that the early Christians entertained no such apprehensions of danger from the perusal of the Sacred Volume, but that, on the contrary, they encouraged laity as well as clergy to study it diligently.*

* A few specimens of the language of some of them with regard to the Bible are sufficient to establish the truth of this assertion. Origen says: “We beseech you not to content yourselves with hearing the Word of God when read in the church, *but to apply yourselves to it at home*, and to meditate upon it day and night; for Jesus Christ is there present as well as in the church, and they that seek him shall find him everywhere. Therefore he hath commanded us to meditate in the Law of the Lord, when we walk by the way, and when we sit in our houses, when we lie down, and when we rise up.” (Vol. ii., p. 240, Par. 1733.)

Jerome, commenting on the words of Paul, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you abundantly in all wisdom,” remarks—“Here we are taught that even the laymen

But now, many Protestants, impressed with the evil consequences which have arisen from setting up tradition on an equality with Scripture, are never weary of repeating that "the Bible only" is their religion. They not only maintain that Scripture is the sole *rule* of Faith, but they seem to imply that no other means of religious *instruction*, are to be admitted; and that all Church-ordinances and Formularies are no other than encroachments on Scripture. They use language which sounds as if they thought that it was the duty of each Christian to take the Bible* and make out from it, without any help from others, a religion for himself. And they so maintain the right of private judgment, as to appear to contend for the utmost license of arbitrary private interpretation of the Scriptures; and as if they deprecated, in the case of the Bible, the use of those means which are indispensable to the understanding of an ordinary classical author.

Now, it is easy to see how injudicious language of this kind puts a weapon into the hands of Romanists. For one of the chief artifices of Romish advocates is to endeavour to persuade their hearers (and this they do ordinarily by taking it for granted) that the alternative is that men must derive their religion either from the Bible, *unaided* by any human help, or else from the Church, teaching on *its own* authority. Now, the less cautiously any anti-Romanist argues, the more colour he

ought to have the Word of God, not only *sufficiently*, but also *abundantly*; and one to instruct and to warn another." (*Com. in Epist. ad Col.*, cap. iii., vol. v., page 1074, Par. 1706.)

To these passages which exhort to the study of the Scriptures, we add the following attestations to the *sufficiency* of the Scriptures. Augustine says: "In those things which are plainly laid down in Scripture, all things are found which embrace faith and morals." (*De Doct. Chris.*, Lib. ii., cap. 9, T. iii. 301. Ed. Bened.) "Whatever ye shall hear thence—i. e., from Scripture—let this savour well with you: *whatever is extraneous to it reject*, lest ye wander in a cloud." (*Serm. de Pastor.*, c. xi. T. v., 238.) "There can be no proof of true Christianity, nor can there be any other refuge of Christians wishing to know the truth of the faith, except the divine Scriptures." (*De Pastor.*, c. xii. T. ix., 279.)

Athanasius expresses himself as follows: "The holy and divinely inspired Scriptures are sufficient for the enunciation of truth." (*Cont. Gentes*, T. i., i. Ed. Bened.) "These [canonical books] are the fountains of salvations, so that he who thirsts may be satisfied with the oracles contained in them: in these alone the school of religion preaches the gospel; let no man add to or take from them." (*Ex festali Epistola*, xxxix. T. ii., 962.)

Lastly, Chrysostom thus speaks of Scripture—"Look for no other teacher; thou hast the oracles of God, none teaches thee like these." (*Hom. ix. in Ep. Coloss.*) "He who useth not the Scriptures, but climbeth up some other way, he is a thief." (*Hom. lix. in Joh.*)

* The Bible, namely, properly so called; that is, the original Hebrew and Greek Scriptures; for every *translation* is a merely human work.

gives to the assertion that this *is* the only alternative ; and he prepares his hearers, if his own theory be found untenable, to accept the Romish theory as the only true one.

But now we ask your attention to the following objections to the statement that we are to learn our religion from the Scriptures alone.

(1.) It appears manifestly, even on a careless perusal of the Books of the New Testament, that not one of them was intended to teach Christianity to those to whom it was before unknown. It would, no doubt, have been very interesting if we had had detailed records of the manner in which the Apostles communicated the Gospel to those who had not before heard the name of our Lord ; but God has seen fit that but little of this kind should have been preserved for us. We have, in the Acts of the Apostles, three or four short addresses delivered by the Apostles to *Jews*,—men who, indeed, knew little of Jesus of Nazareth, but yet who were, from the Old Testament, well instructed in the doctrine that there was to be a Messiah sent from God ;—and we have *one* address (or rather, the beginning of an address, for it was manifestly interrupted by clamour) delivered by Paul to heathens, namely, that spoken at the Areopagus at Athens. Beyond this, the New Testament contains no specimen of the instructions delivered by the Apostles to the heathen. The Epistles were written to Churches already formed ; and were designed not to *teach* Christianity to those who did not know it before, but rather to “ build up *believers* in their most holy faith.” Even the Gospels (which one might have imagined to be summaries of the facts of our Saviour’s life, drawn up for the use of persons wholly ignorant of our religion), even the Gospels seem to presuppose previous catechetical instruction. Luke, you know, tells us that his Gospel was written that Theophilus “ might know the certainty of those things wherein he *had been* instructed :” and there is every presumption, from analogy, that the other Gospels were written with similar objects ; while some of the omissions in their narratives seem difficult to be otherwise accounted for.* But now, if the Bible was not, when it was first written, intended to give instruction to men wholly unacquainted with our religion, is it likely that it is so now ? Does it not seem fitting that they who read the Bible now,

* For instance, there is no account given in any of the Gospels, except John’s, of the first opening of our Lord’s ministry, and of his earliest disciples first joining Him.

should have had at least as much preparatory instruction as shall put them on a level with those for whom it was first written? And considering the difference of the Age and of circumstances, one would expect that for this purpose even more preparatory instruction would be needed now-a-days than was required in the time of the Apostles. To maintain the contrary would be as unreasonable as to assert that a Greek inscription, of the date of the Apostles (which, of course, could be understood at the time only by those who knew how to read) might now be understood by the learned and the illiterate alike.

(2.) The conclusions thus suggested by observing the *persons* to whom the books of the New Testament were written, are confirmed when we examine more closely the contents of these books, and the manner in which they are written. They contain no records of the catechetical instructions given by the teachers of Christianity to their new converts before admitting them to baptism: no Articles, no Confessions of faith: no *systematic* accounts, in short, of the christian doctrines. Many of the writings of the New Testament are *occasional* compositions, drawn forth by the immediate wants of the disciples at the time; and although doubtless still most profitable for *our* instruction, yet they are scarcely such as we should have expected, if intended to be our *first sources* of information as to the doctrines of the Gospel. Accordingly, if we examine the Scripture-proofs which have been given of several important doctrines of our religion, we shall find that they have been obtained by "searching the Scriptures," by comparing one passage with another, and by fixing attention on texts which *imply* rather than assert the doctrines in question. This circumstance does not at all invalidate the *proof* of any of these doctrines; nay, proofs of this kind obtained by a bringing together of scattered passages, are far *more* above suspicion than those derived from a single direct statement. For, a proof from a single text is always open to the objections that possibly this text may have been formerly forged, or at least altered, by some zealous and unscrupulous supporters of the doctrine we are trying to establish. But the more *indirect* our proof is, and the more it depends on the combination of passages apparently not intended to be read in connexion with each other, the more confidence we have reason to feel that such passages were not inserted by human design to prove the doctrine we establish by them. Proof of the one

kind, which lies on the surface, may be torn away without injury to the rest of Scripture ; proof of the other kind, though requiring a closer search to discover, is so interwoven in the texture of the Bible, that it cannot be removed without serious damage to what is left behind. The one may be compared to a piece of precious ore found on the *surface* of the ground, which we cannot be sure might not have been dropped by some chance traveller ; the other, to the same ore dug with labour from a mine, which is, we may be confident, derived from the place where we found it.

And it may be added that slight *incidental allusions* to any doctrine are an indication that it was one so *familiarly known* to the readers already, as hardly to need a formal statement. But still it must be observed that the *implication* of doctrinal points, and the complex character of the scriptural proofs of them, though more convincing and satisfactory as modes of *proof*, are however, less adapted to the purpose of *teaching* the doctrines themselves. A proof which is not obvious does indeed carry far deeper conviction when once it is observed ; but it runs the risk of not being observed.

(3.) Now further, when we consider how careless are many of the readers of the Scripture, it would seem that, were they dependent on Scripture alone, all doctrines not lying on the very surface of the Sacred Page must remain for ever unknown to them. Even in those exact sciences which are peculiarly the province of pure reason, how little should we know if our own reason were our sole guide, and were we not aided by the instruction of others. Ask the best mathematician you know, how many propositions of Euclid he thinks he would have made out for himself had he been left altogether to himself to discover them ? and we believe that you will find few who can venture to say that they would have been able to invent a science of Geometry for themselves : and this, though the thing is perfectly *possible* ; and Pascal, for example, is said when a boy to have made some progress in doing so.

Again, of those who have the Scriptures in their hands and study them well, many will find that several doctrines which they have been in the habit of thinking they had learned from the Bible, were in reality originally derived from some other source. We have often known men to discover with surprise

that Milton was the real authority for some statement which they believed they had found in the Bible. And we have known others first led by the exercise (an excellent one) of collecting Scripture-proofs of the doctrines of their belief, to discover with astonishment that some of these doctrines rested on no scriptural basis at all.

For example, if you inquire among your acquaintance who are well read in the Bible, you will find most of them fully persuaded of its being a fact *recorded in Scripture* that Stephen, the first martyr, was, with six others, ordained by the Apostles to the office of *Deacon*.

Now that these were appointed to the office, and bore the title, of Deacons, such as those mentioned by Paul in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, is a wide-spread and ancient opinion. And it is alluded to by the framers of our Ordination Service as an undoubted fact. Several learned and able Divines, however, have been of a contrary opinion; among others, Bishop Bilson, of our own Church,* and the learned and judicious Vitringa.† But, be the opinion correct or incorrect, it rests on *tradition* alone, and not Scripture; and yet there are many who would be startled at hearing this remarked. Nay, there is even a theological dictionary by a Divine of our Church, in which it is said, under the Article "*Deacon*," that "the first place in which these officers were *mentioned* under *this title* is 6th Acts." Now the word Deacon *never occurs at all* in the Book of Acts from beginning to end! But the writer evidently took his notion from the *headings of the chapters*; which record several traditions that are mistaken by many readers for Scripture.

To take another example; we think that there are many who believe that the *transference* of the Sabbath from Saturday (the "Anglican Figment," as Calvin called it) to Sunday is a doctrine revealed in Scripture; and who would learn with some surprise that in not a single passage of the New Testament (and it might be added, of any writer for centuries after) is any day but Saturday‡

* *Perpetual Government of the Church*, c. vii. He cites Chrysostom to the same effect.

† See *The Synagogue and the Church*; a very valuable abridgment of Vitringa's work, by the Rev. J. L. Bernard. (Fellowes, London.)

‡ In the later Latin, (still in use, for example, in the headings of the parliamentary proceedings, by many apothecaries in their day books, &c.,) Saturday is always called "*Dies Sabbati*;" and in like manner Saturday is called "*Sabbato*" in Italian, and "*Sabbado*" in Spanish.

called the Sabbath: and that though all the early Christians seemed to have observed the first day of the week, the day of Christ's resurrection, as a religious festival peculiarly christian, the Apostles and other Jewish believers adhered to the observance of the Sabbath also, as well as of the other ordinances of the ceremonial Law.

Now if even those who *study* the Bible read it so carelessly as not to distinguish between the truths they have found in Scripture, and the notions they have imbibed elsewhere, can we suppose that the great mass of mankind are likely to study the Bible with sufficient attention to derive from it unaided a correct system of doctrine?

(4.) But this is not all; for a Roman-catholic will not fail to urge that not only are many readers of the Bible too careless to derive for themselves a system of doctrine from it, but that there are a number unable to read it at all. Even at the present day, and in the most civilized Countries, the illiterate, he will say, form a large proportion of the population. But it is only in the last three or four centuries that the idea could have been started at all that men were in general to obtain their knowledge of christian truth from their private perusal of the Scriptures. For before the invention of printing, and the consequent multiplication of copies of the Bible, it was only through the Church that the truths of religion could be learned by the great mass of the people. It would be absurd, he will add, to refer them for instruction to a Book difficult to procure, and which the greater part of them could not read, if they did procure it. The Scriptures themselves they must have regarded, he will consequently infer, as the property of the Church; possessed and preserved by her, and by her communicated to her children.

It might indeed be urged in reply to this statement, that the early Christians were very careful and zealous to multiply copies of the Scriptures; and besides were accustomed to have them always publicly read intelligibly in their religious assemblies—a practice which the modern Church of Rome has unfortunately omitted. But without meaning to say that the position of men in past ages was as favourable for the acquirement of religious knowledge as ours, and admitting that it would be most unwise and unjustifiable of us to deprive ourselves of the additional means of instruction which the Providence of God has granted

to us, still, as no one asserts that the great majority of Christians were left for many hundred years without what was essential to their salvation, it becomes evident that the Bible (or even a translation of it) read by each man in private for himself, is not our *only* source of instruction in saving truth; and it becomes highly probable that God could not have intended it to be the ordinary method of obtaining religious instruction, that each man should by his private perusal of the Scriptures elicit from them his own system of doctrine.

(5.) It may, however, be imagined that in the progress of civilization, education may become so generally diffused that there should be no one, or scarcely any adult person, unable to read the Bible for himself. But still, instruction, independent of the Scriptures, is necessary not only for the *illiterate* among adults, but also for the *young*. If Romanists endeavour to represent us as maintaining that it is our duty merely to put the Bible into the hands of all, leaving each one to make out its meaning for himself, destitute of all human guidance, we answer that such a scheme is not ours, simply because it is impracticable. If men were sent into the world (as Adam is commonly supposed to have been) with their faculties of mind and body complete, and fit for exercise, from the first, then indeed it might be possible to find students of Scripture unbiassed by the sentiments of others, eliciting its meaning for themselves. But Hobbes's notion that the natural state of mankind was a state of warfare of each against each, is not one whit more inconsistent with the actual constitution of society than is the view we are considering. For man comes into the world just as little able to reason as to fight, and requiring as much the instruction, as the protection, of his maturer friends. And in this education, *religious* instruction forms a necessary part. To omit this part with the hope of leaving the mind unbiassed, to judge of the different forms of religion which might in after life be presented to it, would be only to leave it a prey to worse prejudices, and to dangerous habits, and destitute of what ought to have been the fit corrective for them. The fact is, then, that the religious education of the uninformed mind is not only a work of necessity, but one of such importance that it has not been left solely to the care of any private instructors. In the institution of his Church, the Founder of our religion has provided for the instruction of those who,

either from youth, or from lack of time or of knowledge, might be unable or unlikely to study his Word for themselves. And we need scarcely tell you how well this duty has been performed; how fully our Church has provided in her Formularies, and by the labours of her ministers, for the instruction of those who might be either unable or unwilling to obtain it otherwise. The illiterate may, through her, learn those truths which make wise unto salvation; the careless may have them forced on their attention; even the most learned have, by her means, their study of God's Word aided to a greater degree than perhaps they are themselves aware of.

In the points which we have now brought before you, you will probably have recognised some topics often dwelt on by advocates for Romanism. The arguments, however, are none the worse for that. When a man draws from true principles conclusions not warranted by them, the way to answer him is, not by denying his principles, but by seeing what is the conclusion which *does* follow from his principles. So when a Romanist insists on the facts, that it appears both from the contents of the New Testament, and from the persons to whom it was first addressed, that this book was not intended to *teach* Christianity in the first instance;—that many good people in past days got to heaven in ignorance of the Bible,—and that the illiterate of our own day cannot read it for themselves; we shall be better prepared to see that these arguments do *not* prove that the Bible is not our rule of Faith, if we have seen what it is that they *do* prove.

We have endeavoured in this Caution to set forth fully and fairly the objections brought by Romanists, and half-Romanists, against the principle that Holy Scripture is the sole authoritative rule of christian Faith. These objections we know to have been often urged, and with great effect. If it be understood that a Protestant who adopts that principle must necessarily set at nought all submission to, or connexion with a Church, and must utterly *ignore* (as the modern phrase is) the very existence of an Institution most solemnly founded by Christ Himself, we cannot wonder that men should be alarmed and shocked at such consequences.

And if it be also understood as implied by that principle, that a man is bound to refuse all human aid in the formation of his

religious views, and is to proceed by simply studying for himself, and by himself, the Scriptures,—(which we should remember, are written in Hebrew and Greek),—or if he is to avail himself of human aid, so far, and only so far, as to use a *translation* of Scripture made by learned Divines, but to refuse all *other* assistance from them,—the unsuitableness of this procedure for the great mass of mankind, and universally for *children*, even of the wealthier classes, will be so striking as to drive many into the opposite extreme of trusting to Church-authority alone.

But these consequences do not, we are convinced, and have endeavoured to show, really follow from that great Protestant principle; and are drawn from it by the opponents, only by taking advantage of some incautious expressions, made use of by some who in their dread of one extreme have not sufficiently guarded against the danger of seeming to recommend an opposite extreme.

We propose, in the next Number, to follow up the subject by drawing the line as clearly as possible between the distinct offices of a Church and of Scripture.

October, 1852.

No. XXII.

"I kept back nothing that was profitable to you."—Acts, xx. 20.

YOU are probably familiar with the story of the schoolboy learning his letters, who obstinately refused to pronounce the letter A ; though he owned to a friend that he could say it very well, only that he knew that if he said A, he would be obliged to say B ; and so on to the end of the alphabet.

It is possible that some of you may have been dissatisfied with the observations we made in the last Caution, on the necessity of some human teaching in general, and the benefits derived from Church-teaching in particular. This surely was not that the observations themselves were not just ; but rather because you have been accustomed to find them used to prepare the way for other statements which you know to be false ; you have come to regard them as the first letters of an alphabet, for the remainder of which you have no liking. But certainly your general views are not likely to be correct, if there are any *truths* for which you have a distaste, and which you do not like to hear dwelt upon. Accordingly we have judged it important to show (and have proposed it as the subject of the present Number), that the statements we made in our last Caution have no connexion with the consequences which have sometimes been attempted to be deduced from them ; that we may maintain it to be the office of a Church to *teach*, and yet also consistently maintain it to be the duty of the individual to require of his Church *proof*,—*Scripture-proof*,—of the doctrines which she teaches.

In fact, we believe that there is no better way to prevent you from ascribing to the teaching of Man the authority due to the Word of God, than to acknowledge distinctly the necessity of human teaching, and to point out how many important parts of our present knowledge we owe to it. For, the rejection of human teaching in theory, often goes together with superstitious submission to it in practice. A man who determines on renouncing

all human guidance, may overlook the fact that part of the guidance which he follows is only human; nay, is tempted by his theory to suppose that the things which he does not chuse to reject, do *not* rest merely on human authority.

For example, we can conceive the case of a man resolving to dispense with all human aids to the understanding of the Scriptures, casting off the assistance of Church-formularies, and of commentators, and determining to form for himself his system of doctrine, by his private study of the Bible, and without any help from others. And yet this very man may forget that the book he reads is only a *translation* of the Bible; or may not reflect that a translation (serving as it does as an explanation and perpetual commentary on the text) is *human* help to the understanding of the Bible, and that of the most important kind. Nay, this very man may be even highly indignant if any one offer him a translation of any text of Scripture, different from that of the authorized Version, and may speak as if he believed that to acknowledge that our translators might in any instance have been mistaken, were to shake the foundations on which his faith depends. It is plain that such a man, while professing to dispense with all human assistance, is in reality employing it, and ascribing to it, moreover, higher authority than it is entitled to. We may add, too, that such a man would ascribe to the authorized Version, authority which our Church has never claimed for it. For though it was necessary to the uniformity of her Services, to appoint some one version to be used in the public reading of the Bible in the congregation, our Church has never made this version (as the Roman-catholic Church has made the Vulgate) a Standard whose interpretations of the original shall be in all cases above dispute.* And it must be remembered that the present authorized Version was not in existence when the Thirty-nine Articles were drawn up, and that

* Many well-educated persons, however, seem to take for granted that the Church has made some such claim. We have just met with the following illustration of this. Sir Francis Head, in his *Fortnight in Ireland*, p. 26, says:—

“The [Irish] Commissioners [of Education] give to the students a new and curtailed translation of a very small portion of the Bible, the inaccuracy of which small portion is thus described (*vide* their Preface) in their own words:—

“‘The translation has been made by a comparison of the authorized and Douay versions with the original. The language sometimes of the one, and sometimes of the other, has been adopted, and *occasional deviations* have been made from both.’”

Here it is taken for granted as self-evident, that a version which “makes occasional deviations” from the authorized must necessarily be *inaccurate*!

consequently the words "Holy Scripture," in the Sixth Article, cannot denote that Version.

Observe, however, that the dependence above alluded to, of the unlearned on the learned, for translations of Scripture, is very far from amounting to a submissive reliance on *their word*, for all that Scripture contains, and for the very existence of the Sacred Books. On the contrary, the known existence of several distinct, and even *rival* Versions of the Scriptures, into English and many other modern languages, all substantially agreeing, where there *could* not have been any concert—all, even the most imperfect, exhibiting all the main facts and doctrines of our religion,—this affords to the unlearned reader a perfectly good ground for his acceptance of that religion; and a ground quite independent of any implicit reliance on the good faith, and on the wisdom, of the translators.

Somewhat similar remarks to those above made, would apply, even if the person of whom we have been speaking were one of the comparatively few who can read the original Scriptures for themselves. Such a person would, notwithstanding, not escape being indebted to the assistance of others. For he would have recourse to the help of an *editor*, who would not only assist him to ascertain what the genuine text is, but who would also, by *punctuation* and other divisions of the text, give him important aid towards the understanding of it. And it is quite possible that he may attach to such divisions of the text more authority than they are entitled to. This, at least, we know, that the ordinary divisions into chapters and verses (comparatively modern as they are, and introduced merely for the purpose of easier *reference* to passages of Scripture) are regarded by many of the unlearned as having been made by the Writers themselves: while some who ought to know better, are found,—even if they do not commit the same mistake themselves,—yet to object to the exposure of the error, lest it should "unsettle men's minds."

We might have brought forward these examples, had our object merely been (as in the last Number) to show how impossible it is for men to dispense altogether with the assistance of others; since even if we resolve on being guided by the Bible alone, without any help from commentators, we are still compelled to have recourse to human aid for the right understanding of it. But our immediate object in producing these examples now, was,

that you should see that in pointing out to you how much of our religious knowledge we owe to Church-teaching and other human aids, we are not exalting human authority to the place of divine. The persons who actually run the risk of committing this error, are those who silently avail themselves of human assistance, without acknowledging that it is only *man's* help to which they are indebted.

Having made these preliminary observations, let us go on to examine what are the consequences which fairly follow from the statements in our last Number. We there mentioned various objections to the supposition that it was intended that men should each separately learn religious truth, and by the study of the Scriptures alone. And this naturally leads us to inquire whether the Founder of our religion has appointed any additional means for our instruction in his doctrines. And here it appears at once, that whether we can dispense with the help of others or not, He certainly did not intend us to do so. He instituted a *social* religion. He formed his followers into a community, each member of which was to benefit by the good offices of the rest, and who in particular were to "build up one another in their most holy faith." More than this, He appointed an Order of men whose especial duty it is to teach and to impress upon the minds of the people, the great doctrines of their religion. It is an historical fact, (as certain as the resurrection of our Lord,) that He appointed a number of his disciples (not indeed to act as sacrificing priests who should make atonement for the sins of the people, but) to the special work of *teaching* his religion: that these again appointed others to succeed them in the same work, and that there has continued such an Order of ministers from our Saviour's time to our own.* Now this is a fact which cannot safely be lost sight of when we interpret the Scriptures. Were the object of our study an ordinary classical writer, an interpreter who, devoid of all sobriety of judgment, should scorn to study the opinions of the wise and learned men who had preceded him, would be likely to arrive at conclusions more startling

* But you will remember that we pointed out to you (see p. 302) that though the apostolical succession of the christian ministry *generally* is an undoubted fact, it is not possible to prove that *this or that individual* minister has received his Orders in an unbroken line from the Apostles; nor is there any Scripture warrant for asserting that such a proof is necessary to assure his congregation of the validity of the sacraments ministered by him.

for their novelty than valuable for their correctness. But now suppose that the author of the work in question had himself given instructions in the subject of it, to a number of men who should form themselves into a school of lecturers on this work, continued by constant succession to our own time—would any commentator undertake to explain such a book, without availing himself of the labours of this school of lecturers? Not that he would consider their interpretations *authoritative*, or that he would suppose their *tradition* more trustworthy authority as to the doctrines of their master, than his own written statements; he might even think it more likely than not, that a number of ingenious men would in time have mixed up something of their own with what had been originally committed to them; and yet he might feel that such a set of lecturers possessed certain advantages towards the right understanding of the author commented on, and that he would not be justified in refusing to listen to them, and to listen with attention, though not with blind acquiescence.

But it may, perhaps, be said that the case of the Bible differs from that of a profane author, in that the readers of the former are promised the aid of the Spirit of God, to enlighten their understandings, and to communicate to them the true meaning of the written Word. It should be remembered, however, that the Ordinances of Christ's Church are no less *truly* his gift than the incomparably greater gift of his Holy Spirit. And no one can reasonably expect to receive from our Lord secret and supernatural assistance, if he neglect to avail himself of the aids which the same Lord, in the ordinary ways of his Providence, has furnished us with.

It remains for us now to consider whether, when we maintain that it is the office of the Church to teach religious truth, we are bound in consistency to maintain (as Romanists do) that she must teach *on her own authority*, and that her members are bound to accept her teaching without requiring from her any proofs; or, on the other hand, whether if we be convinced of the falsity of this latter dogma, we must resist all claims on the part of the Church to "authority* in controversies of Faith." We have admitted that the Scriptures seem to pre-suppose some

* We hope that you have not forgotten what we observed to you, p. 151, as to the two different meanings of the word "authority." We speak of authority as binding the conduct; as, for instance, "the authority of an Act of Parliament," meaning thereby that a good subject is bound to *obey* an Act of Parliament, though not necessarily to

previous information on the part of those who read them ; and we have spoken of the advantages of Church-teaching in communicating that preliminary information. But how are we to answer the Romanist, who urges that God must surely have provided some means which shall infallibly secure those truths from being lost or corrupted, the knowledge of which is, by our own confession, requisite to the right understanding of the Bible ?

Perhaps we shall be better able to answer this question if we do not confine our attention to *religious* truth, but, on the contrary, examine first the manner in which we come to the knowledge of other kinds of truth. We shall then be better able to decide whether or not the manner in which we arrive at full information as to the doctrines of Christianity, differs essentially from that in which God has seen fit that we should obtain our knowledge on other subjects. And it will be found that there are several other branches of learning, with regard to which we must maintain the necessity of human teaching,—must hold that the learner is bound to receive such teaching with deference and submission,—while we also maintain that the learner must ultimately arrive at a point when he no longer depends on the mere *testimony* of his instructors, but becomes competent to pass an independent judgment on the truth of the statements made to him.

Let us then consider, in the first place, the manner in which we obtain our knowledge of a dead language ; an example with which we purposely commence, because it appears to be an unfavourable one for our argument, it being a case where our knowledge seems wholly to depend on tradition and on the instruction of others. On reflection, however, we shall find some reason to believe that if a man were furnished with a sufficient quantity of writing in a language unknown to him, it would not be *impossible* for him to obtain a knowledge of its meaning without any help from others. The celebrated Halley published a translation of an Arabic manuscript, found in the Bodleian Library, the meaning of which he had made out without any previous knowledge of the language, and merely with the assist-

approve of it: and we speak of authority as influencing the *judgment*; as, for instance, "the authority of a good historian," meaning thereby that he has claims to attention and deference, though of course no power to *force* men to submit to his decisions. It is in the latter sense, obviously, that the word is here used.

ance of a previous translation of a small portion of the manuscript; and our Oriental scholars are at present engaged, with more or less success, on a similar task, namely, the deciphering of the Assyrian inscriptions. There seems, then, some reason to think that, were every man, at present acquainted with the Greek language, to die without communicating his knowledge to others, and were every book destroyed which contained the interpretation of a Greek word or sentence, the ingenuity of the next generation would be sufficient to re-discover the language from the Greek works at present in existence. But be this as it may, assuredly such is not the way in which languages are ordinarily learned. The knowledge of the meaning of the common Greek words has been preserved by *tradition*; and each new student obtains his knowledge either from oral instruction, or from lexicons, which may be considered as the embodiment of that tradition. And yet, as the student advances, when, by the perusal of Greek writers, he can judge of the sense in which they employed different words, he finds himself become gradually competent to form an independent opinion on the correctness of the explanations with which his instructors had furnished him. He can judge whether the key, with which he had been supplied, fits the lock exactly, though he might have found it difficult, or perhaps impossible, to construct a key for himself. And an accomplished scholar, if called on to pass judgment on the precise meaning of a Greek word, would do so, not by counting up the *testimony* on both sides of the question, but by examining for himself the different passages where it was employed. Thus, though his knowledge had been originally obtained by tradition, he becomes by degrees able to correct that tradition. And, in point of fact, a good Greek scholar of our islands would not feel bound to submit his judgment on the interpretation of an ancient Greek author, to that of a native of Athens; though, as far as mere tradition is concerned, the modern Greek has obvious advantages over him.

Let us now proceed to another illustration, which, indeed, we had occasion to employ also in the last Caution. In the science of *mathematics* we observed that it is *possible* that an individual might make out for himself all that is known, without any help from others. And yet, were there no mathematical *teaching*, it is probable that not one in a million would have even a moderate

acquaintance with the science. Again, even in mathematics, it is necessary that the learner should receive with docility the lessons of his teacher; if he were to try to show his cleverness by cavilling and endeavouring to find out objections to what he was taught, (and that before he perfectly understood it,) it is very likely that he would make no progress in the science at all. And there are some of the higher parts of mathematics of which the first principles are so difficult, that the learner often finds it convenient to take them for granted, *for a time*, on the authority of his teacher, and only comes thoroughly to understand them by the practice of the rules founded on them. But then, as long as the learner only believes on the authority of his teacher, so long he can be said to *know* nothing of mathematics: his knowledge of the science only begins when he can understand the force of the *proofs* offered him, and when he can make out demonstrations for himself.

The same science serves well to illustrate the double meaning of the word "authority," which we have before alluded to. Thus we say that Sir Isaac Newton is a high authority in mathematics; and we should expect a student to commence reading his great work, the *Principia*, with a full persuasion beforehand, that the demonstrations about to be offered him would prove satisfactory; and with a disposition, in case he came to one which did not at first seem to him to be valid, to believe that the fault did not lie in Sir Isaac's proof, but in his own imperfect understanding of it. Now and then, indeed, some crackbrained mathematician does publish to the world his conviction that the so-called demonstrations of the *Principia* are all mere sophisms; but he only gets laughed at for his pains, and Sir Isaac's authority remains unshaken. But yet, for all that, if a man, being asked why he believed in the truth of a certain proposition of the *Principia*, were to reply that he believed it on the *authority* of Sir Isaac Newton, and if he imagined that no other proof was necessary, we should at once know that he was no mathematician, and that he understood nothing of the nature of mathematical evidence.

You will, perhaps, think that we have wandered from our subject in this disquisition on the manner in which we obtain our knowledge of Greek or of mathematics. But what we wish to impress on you is, that the mode in which God has appointed that we should obtain our knowledge of religious truth, does not

differ essentially from that in which we become acquainted with other kinds of truth. It is true (as is urged by Romanists and half-Romanists) that it has been ordained by Providence that, in religious matters, we should be indebted for our knowledge to the instruction of others, and to information handed down to us by those who went before us; and it is true, moreover, that the furnishing such instruction to his disciples, is a point for which the Founder of our religion has, in the institution of his Church, carefully provided. But then it is also true that it is the *general* rule of God's Providence to make us dependent upon others, not only for much of our happiness, but also for the greater part of our knowledge; and *that*, even in those subjects in which it is possible for unassisted individuals to make the greatest discoveries. If, therefore, we infer that because the Church is the appointed means for conveying to us religious instruction, therefore Church-teaching can in no case be disputed; we may just as fairly conclude that no mathematician is at liberty to doubt any of the theorems communicated to him by those who first instructed him. But if, in other subjects, the fact that we commence with the passive reception of information from others, does not exclude the necessity of our own minds being afterwards actively engaged in the search for truth, surely that subject forms no exception which is best worthy of occupying our thoughts, and on which the search for truth best repays investigation.

We believe that it is of considerable importance that you should keep steadily before your minds this resemblance on which we have been commenting, between the manner of acquiring religious and other kinds of truth. And you will find this particularly useful in answering objections. Thus, for example, Romanists assume that because we require proof of the doctrines propounded to us by the Church, we must be perpetually wavering and hesitating in our faith; doubting and disbelieving these doctrines until they have been actually demonstrated to us. But we can at once perceive the unsoundness of this assumption, by considering any of the parallel cases we have brought before your notice. We have seen (p. 397) that it is a learner's business to require proof from a mathematical instructor, and not to be satisfied until he has obtained convincing proof:

and yet that the frame of mind in which he asks for proof is by no means one either of doubt or disbelief.

Again, Romanists frequently taunt Protestants with the abuses of private judgment, and with the many instances of individuals who, in their exercise of it, have rejected fundamental doctrines of the Gospel. But a little reflection on parallel cases leads us to perceive how many of these abuses may be traceable to the extravagant claims of the Church of Rome herself. Since, if a number of persons had maintained that we are bound to receive all the theorems of the *Principia* on the mere word of Sir Isaac Newton; and if, previous to our perusal of the book, we had been obliged to spend much time in establishing our right to reject any of his theorems, of which the demonstrations might be erroneous; we can conceive that the effect of such a controversy would be to make many readers of the volume more difficult to be satisfied than they are now;—to make them find even mathematical evidence unconvincing, and to cause them to reject many theorems merely to make sure that they had a right to do so.

Again, we may be pressed with the difficulty, that since we have admitted that the Scriptures require a certain amount of preliminary information in those who read them, for communicating which information Church-teaching is the appointed means,—consistency obliges us to maintain that such Church-teaching must always be absolutely correct: for that if it were possible that the Church might lose or corrupt any of the doctrines entrusted to its keeping, the student of Scripture would be deprived of that which, by our own admission, is necessary to his understanding it. You must observe, however, that we never said it was impossible (though we acknowledged it was difficult) for an individual to draw a correct system of doctrine from the Bible without any help from Church-teaching. Still further were we from saying that it could not be possible for one, who had received teaching only partially correct, afterwards to discover the errors in what he had been taught, by his private study of the Bible. In fact, we know that improvements are made in metaphysics and political economy, and such like sciences, not by persons who have thought out the whole subject for themselves without help from others, but by those who,

having been well instructed in what has been done already, afterwards, by their own thought and study, correct the mistakes of their predecessors, even of the very persons from whom they have themselves learned. But then, if God has given to comparatively few the power of *discovering* truth, he has given to many the faculty of *recognising* it; and in conformity with this very arrangement of his Providence, which makes us depend on others for so much of our knowledge, the truths found out by one man are rapidly communicated to others; and the discoveries of one generation become part of the elementary instruction of the next. Thus instruction and independent study react upon each other; and their relation may be illustrated by the channel of a river, which confines and directs the flow of the stream, while itself is liable to be continually altered by that stream. When Luther discovered that the Church-teaching of his day was erroneous, in the efficacy which it assigned to papal indulgences, he did not adopt an opinion more opposed to his original prejudices, than those did, who discovered that the earth, instead of being a flat surface, admitted of the existence of antipodes; that instead of being at rest, it was in rapid motion; that the sun, instead of being about a foot in diameter, is immensely larger than the earth; and so forth. And yet these doctrines, monstrous paradoxes as they must have seemed at first, have now passed into the course of elementary instruction, and are taught us so early, that we can scarcely remember the time when we were first startled by them.

You see, then, that we are not only not inconsistent, but that we make assertions in strict harmony with the manner in which we obtain the rest of our knowledge, when we maintain that God has appointed that the instruction of others shall be the ordinary means of our acquiring religious knowledge; that such instruction, if not watched, and if accepted without examination, is liable, like everything human, to go wrong; but that, on the other hand, this partially-erroneous instruction, (besides being itself useful to a certain extent,) may be constantly corrected and rendered less and less faulty, by those who, having received it, test it by its proper proofs.

Leaving it then to yourselves to answer other objections which you may hear urged, by the use of the same analogies which we have here employed, we think we may consider it as proved

that we can with perfect consistency maintain, that while it is the office of the Church to teach, it is her duty to do so, not by making assertions merely, but by offering proofs. And again, that while it is the duty of the individual Christian to receive with deference the teaching of the Church, it is also his duty not listlessly to acquiesce in her statements, but also to satisfy himself of the validity of her proofs; to examine for himself "whether these things be so."

But supposing it established that the Church must supply proof of her doctrines, the question next arises, Whence is this proof to be derived? We maintain, as our Church does, that such proofs must be taken from Holy Scripture only; for, that there is no other authentic record of the teaching of our Lord and his Apostles. No doubt Romanists appeal to tradition also, and say that since we received Scripture itself on the authority of tradition, we cannot consistently reject anything else that comes to us on the same authority. But surely it does not follow that because we receive the testimony of one man, we are bound to receive the testimony of every other man; nor will it be pretended that we have no right to distinguish between one kind of testimony and another. We readily acknowledge that if there were as strong testimony in favour of any doctrine not contained in Scripture, as that which proves the books of the New Testament to have been written by Apostles, or by their contemporary fellow-labourers, then we should be bound to receive such a doctrine. But until this can be shewn, it is mere playing on words to argue that because the evidence for any particular doctrine is tradition, and the evidence for the authenticity of Scripture is tradition, therefore both rest on the *same* authority. The evidence on which we believe the genuineness and authenticity of the Books of the New Testament, is stronger than that on which we believe the *Æneid* to be the work of Virgil; but for any saying, or action, or doctrine of our Lord, not contained in the Bible, there really is not as much evidence as the editor of a respectable newspaper requires, before admitting an announcement of news into his columns.

Indeed, when we search for the early history of the christian Church, it is remarkable what a break occurs after the New Testament histories, and before we come to other trustworthy records of much historical value. For instance, as to a fact so

little likely to be forgotten, as the number of years our Saviour lived on earth, the duration of his ministry, and his personal appearance, we find very opposite statements in early christian writers, who, we should have supposed, had the means of being accurately informed;* and when we seek for information on those difficulties of the New Testament, on which we should have supposed tradition best able to throw light (for example, the different genealogies of Matthew and Luke, the phrase, "what withholdeth," in 2 Thess. ii. 6; the difficulties in 1 Cor. xi. 10, or in 1 Cor. xiv., &c.), we find the writers of the second and third centuries as much perplexed as ourselves, or solving the difficulties by their ingenuity, and not by the help of any independent sources of information.

The remarks which we have just made will apply not only to the Romish theory of tradition, but also to that of some Protestants, who, while they agree with us in rejecting the claims of tradition to be placed on a level with Scripture, contend for a *sub-ordinate* (though not a *co-ordinate*) tradition. They hold that our rule of faith is Scripture *interpreted* by the tradition of the Church; and though they are not consistent enough to maintain that the Church is infallible, yet they assert that its interpretations of Scripture must be received without appeal. This theory, however, is not only less consistent than the Romish theory, but is liable to even more objections. It places on private Christians two burdens instead of one; requiring us to believe, not only that the doctrines propounded by the Church are true, but also that they are contained in Scripture, whether we can find them there or no. And it tends as effectually as the Romish scheme to discourage the private study of the Scripture; since, if the comment must be received implicitly and without appeal, it is placed, in all but dignity, on a level with the text; while the comment, being the more compendious and methodical, will necessarily supersede the text. No one who can readily obtain the manufactured article will expend his own less skilled labour in working up raw materials for himself.

We hold, then, that whether a Church deliver doctrines or interpretations to its members, it is bound not to demand their

* Clement of Alexandria makes the whole duration of our Lord's ministry but one year, while Irenæus states, on the authority of friends of St. John, that our Saviour passed through all the stages of human life from infancy to old age.

assent without supplying them proofs; and since there is no reason to believe that our Lord entrusted to the keeping of tradition any of the essentials of Christianity, we maintain that in the case of an article of faith, *Scripture*-proof alone is admissible. We believe, in short, that while it is the office of the Church to *teach*, it is the province of Scripture to *prove*.*

All that we have said as to the necessity of human teaching, and on the deference due to the judgment of the pious and learned men who have preceded us, is quite consistent with the demand of Scripture-proof in the last resort. A town clock is of excellent use in making publicly known with authority, the correct time; making it known to many who, perhaps, at no time, and certainly not at all times, would find it convenient to verify its correctness for themselves. And yet it is clear that one who maintained the great use and importance of having such a clock, would not be in the least inconsistent, if he also maintained that it might possibly go astray, and if he inculcated the necessity of frequently comparing it with, and regulating it by, the dial which receives its light from heaven.

It is easy to show that the statement we have made as to the respective offices of the Church and of Scripture, corresponds exactly to the view taken by the Reformed Church. If she had, like the Roman-catholic Church, put human authority in the place of divine,—the Church in the place of Scripture,—then she would not have translated the Bible and exhorted her people to read it; but would rather have kept it, like the Jewish Holy of Holies, to be occasionally visited by the High Priest: if, again, she had thought that each person was to make out a system of religion for himself by simply reading the Bible, she would have appointed *no* Order of men to instruct the people. As it is, she fully provides for the instruction of the illiterate, both by the labours of her Clergy, and also by supplying the people not only with the Scriptures themselves, but, besides, with summaries of the important truths contained in them. But then she does not step out of her province of giving instruction in the truth already revealed, to claim the right of developing new truths, or making new revelations. She proclaims openly that her doctrine is not hers, and she points to the Sacred Volume as the source

* See Dr. Hawkins's valuable work upon *Unauthoritative Tradition*, to which we have been largely indebted in this, and the last Caution.

whence she received it. She acknowledges that she has no power to teach, as an article of faith, any doctrine not contained in Scripture. Even for the creeds, ancient and extensively received as they are, she claims belief, neither because of their antiquity, nor because of their universal acceptance among orthodox Christians, nor because of *her* authority; but "because they may be proved by most certain warrant of Holy Scripture."

If any of her members chuse to examine for themselves whether she have faithfully reported the contents of Holy Writ, she blames them not for presumption in so doing: she courts inquiry, convinced that her doctrines can stand the test of examination, and satisfied also that such examination is the duty of her members. Nay, for such of them as might not be of themselves disposed to enter on such an examination, she spontaneously presents them with the opportunity of comparing her doctrines with the Word of God, by introducing into her ordinary public Services so much of the Scriptures, that the illiterate of her congregations have means of being acquainted with the Bible, such as they would not possess in any other religious community.

Let not then—we would say to some well-intentioned but incautious friends—let not your justly-indignant zeal against what are falsely called Church-principles, lead you to disparage or to keep out of sight, true Church-principles. Do not give so great an advantage to those Romanists and half-Romanists who are for sacrificing the Gospel to the Church, as to allow them to urge, even with any show of reason, that you are despising what is undeniably of divine authority. True it is (and a most important truth) that a Church is only the *means*, and that the right knowledge and practice of Christianity is the *end*; and that if we were compelled to chuse between the two, we should be bound to prefer the end to the means. But it is also true that, generally, no such choice is actually proposed to us; and that Christ's sanction is distinctly given both to the end and to the means,—to the christian Faith and to christian Communities; and that we are not authorized to disregard the claims of either.

And it is not enough to abstain from all express denial of either. If any one (as we formerly observed) dwells much, and almost exclusively, on one point, he may lead some to disregard

the rest ; and he may lead others to *impute* this disregard to him, and thence to lend a more willing ear to those who may be committing a like fault on the opposite side.

Even thus, men who are always declaiming on the blessings of liberty, on the rights of the people, and on the duties of governors, keeping out of sight entirely the duties of subjects, and the necessity for control, and the claims of magistrates to obedience, will generally end in making their hearers Chartists ; and, at any rate, will give others an opportunity of representing them as quite indifferent if not hostile to the cause of Law and order. Others, again, by dwelling perpetually on the rights of governments, and the duties of subjects, and keeping all other rights and all other duties out of sight, may be, without distinctly advancing anything but what is true, virtually training rulers to be despotic, and subjects to be slaves.

In the next Caution we intend to lay before you some thoughts upon the measures necessary for securing the preservation of the Church as a Society.

November, 1852.

No. XXIII.

"For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints."—1 Cor. xiv. 33.

A STRANGER visiting Holland is struck at once with the vast embankments girdling the whole coast, which must have been raised at first by a prodigious effort of human industry, and which still require, from year to year, continual labour to keep them in repair. These gigantic *Dykes* (as they are called) produce no crops useful to man; and they are very far indeed from being an ornament to the landscape; and yet they were reared, and are maintained, at a far greater expense of toil and money, than is bestowed upon many a fair acre of the rich and fruitful land which lies beside their barren and unsightly bulwarks.

Now, why is this? It is because the Dykes, though they yield no harvest themselves to the husbandman, and, in themselves, disfigure rather than embellish the face of the country, are nevertheless quite necessary for the protection of those cheerful tilled fields, and smiling meadows, which, without them, would be flooded with the sea. The prudent Dutchman knows well that the Dykes are essential to the very existence of his country; and that, if they fell to ruin, there would be an end to Holland.

Suppose, again, our Traveller to pass on through Belgium towards France. As he approaches the French border, he finds every town surrounded by forts and batteries, and enormous banks and covered ways, that answer no purpose of profit or amusement, while they are continually exhausting the revenue of the State in maintaining them. He sees the streets filled with the soldiers of the garrisons of these towns, who appear to be supported from the public purse only to pass their time in an ostentatious kind of busy idleness. They seem to have nothing to do but to parade in the morning, pace up and down, with muskets in their hands, all day, and then go to bed, at beat of

drum, in the evening. These men "toil not, neither do they spin;" nay, the great object of the rules they live by seems to be to prevent them from engaging in any really useful employment; and yet they are better fed, better clad, and better housed, than many an industrious labourer or artizan, who is contributing directly to the wealth of the State, and who has to pay out of his hard earnings for the gay clothes and good dinners of these idle warriors.

It is probable that, in a long peace, the Belgian peasants and mechanics may sometimes grumble a little at all this; but the threat of a foreign invasion, doubtless, opens the eyes of even the most ignorant and unthinking to the importance of strong forts and well-disciplined garrisons, and makes every one feel that the walls and soldiers, unproductive as they are in themselves, are well worth all the money that is expended on them.

We have adduced these instances to illustrate a distinction—which it is useful to remember in considering such subjects as we have been lately treating of—a distinction between two ends of government, that are often confounded together by careless thinkers. "There is one end of civil government," says Paley, "peculiar to a good constitution—namely, the happiness of its subjects; there is another end, essential to a good government, but common to it with many bad ones—*its own preservation*."

Now you will readily perceive, upon a moment's reflection, that such a distinction as this is just as applicable to ecclesiastical societies as to civil—to Churches as to States.

Civil Government has one grand object—not, indeed, as Paley loosely says, "the happiness" in general, of its subjects—but the supply of that great means of happiness which could not be otherwise obtained—the security of life, and property, and reputation, &c. And for the direct purpose of accomplishing this great end, the Government makes laws against murder, theft, slander, and so forth.

But, in order to enable it to carry out such laws, the Government must further take measures for its own preservation and support. The life and freedom of the Sovereign, for example, and the purity of descent in the Royal line, are guarded by the peculiar laws against *High Treason*; not because royal blood is, in itself, more valuable than any other, but because the stability

of the Government depends upon the safety of the Prince, and the certainty of the Succession to the Crown.

The compulsory imposition of Taxes, again, is so far from tending directly to the preservation of private property that it seems, at first sight, a direct violation of it, in taking a man's money out of his pocket whether he will or not. Yet it is plain that the machinery needful for the protection of our properties could not be maintained if taxes were not thus imposed.

Then, again, in civil affairs, there are a thousand minor matters of detail, which the law fixes in one particular way—not because that one particular way is, in itself, indispensable to compassing the end designed, but because that end could not be compassed unless these, apparently trivial, things were fixed in *some* way. The precise time of a man's coming of age,—the seasons of business and vacation in the Courts of Law,—the standing which shall qualify a Barrister to be a Judge,—the exact amount of property which shall entitle a man to vote at elections,—the dresses and titles of persons of rank or in office,—the order of proceeding in Trials and Parliaments;—in all these cases it cannot be pretended that the Rules actually fixed are so necessary that the ends of good government could not be sufficiently well served in some other way than the one selected. Men, in general, for example, are not very much wiser at twenty-one than they were at twenty; and a man whose freehold is worth just 40 shillings yearly, has not a very much deeper stake in the country than he whose freehold is worth no more than 39*s.* 11*d.* But we all know that, when a line is to be drawn, it must be drawn somewhere; and, in such cases as the above, wherever it is drawn, the place will be, within certain limits, quite arbitrary, and be attended with some real inconveniences and many seeming absurdities.

Now, let us apply these principles to Ecclesiastical Communities.

The great end of the Church is to provide men with the means of Salvation; and, among these means, we have lately been speaking a great deal of a most important one—namely, christian teaching. In one sense, indeed, Christ and his Apostles, together with the Prophets of the Old Law, are the only Teachers of the Church, and we all, *disciples* in common. But, since these inspired instructors speak in a language now unintelligible to the

bulk of mankind,* it is needful that well qualified persons should be provided, in every generation, to bring their brethren, as far as possible, within reach of that divine instruction, and enable them to understand it. And this office surely cannot be more fitly entrusted to any than to those appointed to lead the public devotions of the Church, and administer its Sacraments. It seems most decorous, convenient, and every way fitting that to these—the clergy—should be committed the office of publicly instructing the people in religion.

Now, well-instructed Christians perform, as we have said, this good office for their brethren, partly by translating the words of Holy Scripture† into the mother-tongue of each country;—partly by informing the unlearned of such matters of history, geography, &c., as contribute to making clear its sense; and partly by pointing out the connexion of thought and argument, and by bringing together the various portions of the Sacred Writings, so as to reflect mutual light upon each other. Without such aids, it is manifest, the bulk of mankind could not be brought effectually under the teaching of their inspired instructors; and, even with such aids, it is idle to pretend that the unlearned can be placed in altogether as advantageous a position as those who combine greater knowledge with equal zeal and piety: though our efforts should be constantly directed towards removing, as far as possible, all differences of this kind between Christians, and bringing all equally and immediately within hearing of every word which “the Spirit saith unto the churches.”

It is, then, necessary, as the immediate means towards the grand end of teaching the way of Salvation, that there should be a body of learned christians in the Church. But the foregoing observations do not at once prove the necessity of a *peculiar*

* “Greek!” exclaimed a fanatical preacher in the hearing of our informant, “I wonder what St. Paul knew of Greek!” The reader will perhaps wonder what this man knew of St. Paul. Yet something of the same confusion of ideas is not unfrequent, even with persons less sublimely indifferent to knowledge, and to modest inquiry after knowledge, than the hero of our story.

† It is possible that some of you may have been startled at our remark (in the last Number, and also in No. XIV. p. 282—3) that the translator of any book is virtually a kind of commentator, since he puts before us what is, in his opinion, the sense of each passage. We have, therefore, thought it worth while to append as a note at the end of this Number, a reference to some passages of Scripture, in which a good deal turns on the sense in which certain words and sentences of the original are understood, and in which different translators, each exercising his own judgment on the question, have differed from each other.

Order of teachers—a clergy, as distinct from the laity. Doubtless much may be, and has been done by laymen in the way of christian instruction. The famous Mr. Locke, for instance, has given the Church a Commentary, in many respects highly valuable, upon the Epistles of Paul : and others also, who, like him, never entered the clerical profession, have, like him, contributed much to improve and enlarge men's knowledge of the Scriptures. Indeed, the first translation of the Gospels into the mother-tongue of our Saxon forefathers was made by a layman—King Alfred,—who was certainly much better qualified to instruct the people in religion, than hundreds of the clergy at that time in England.

But the need of an Order of *appointed* teachers results mainly from the importance of having some readily recognisable mark to distinguish well qualified teachers from bad. It is of the greatest importance that the ignorant should know to *whom* they may safely resort, and not be left to pick up instructors by chance, or select them according to their own whim ; and, therefore, it is needful that public authority should set apart some person in each neighbourhood to the office of a public instructor. But the solemn setting a man apart to the ministry of the word is not that which *makes* him able to discharge that office. It only recognises his previous ability,—declares his qualification for that great work,—and gives him permission to engage in it ; just as the Queen's image and superscription do not make the metal they are stamped upon pure gold or silver, but only assure us of the weight and purity of the piece, and so render it a convenient medium of exchange. It is conceivable, indeed, that an assayer may be hasty, or even designedly unfaithful ; and so the royal stamp might, in some cases, mislead those who trusted to it ; but then it is obvious that, under anything like a reasonably good government, the chances of error are lessened, and not increased, by having such an officer.

Vain, therefore, is the cavil which, it may be foreseen, some will raise against what we have been just saying of the necessity of providing in the Church an Order of regularly appointed teachers.—“ Is it not notorious that, in point of fact, not only in Alfred's time, but in our own, some men have been called to the ministry, of slender abilities or learning, and far worse qualified

for the post of instructors, than others, upon whom they look down as mere laymen?"

True it is that such instances are to be found ; and that they probably will continue to occur, more or less, as long as man remains an imperfect Being. Nor is it less true, that the command of a ship or of an army is sometimes intrusted to an incompetent person. But would it, therefore, be wise to abolish all such appointments, and let any man who chose to step into a ship and take the command, or make himself general of an army? Accidents happen on railways from careless or ignorant drivers ; but would it mend the matter to have *no* regular driver, but to let any passenger at his pleasure assume that office?

So also in the Church, and every other kind of institution, it is right that, for any important service, persons should be specially appointed. And the most vigilant care should be used to select fit persons for each office. But if we were to wait till we had attained complete security that no error in the appointment could possibly take place, we should wait for ever.

What leads, however, some incautious people to decry all use of the aid of a fellow-christian in religion is their dread (and it is a just one) of the error of substituting another's knowledge for one's own, and following his *directions* instead of using his *instructions*.

But, as we formerly remarked, to employ a lawyer to *educate* you in law, is widely different from employing him to transact some legal business *for* you : to apply to a physician to *teach* you the principles of anatomy and pharmacy, is quite different from calling him in to prescribe for you.

This latter course answers to the case of the Roman-catholic priest ; the other to the Protestant pastor.

"Is Ordination then"—it may be asked from an opposite quarter, "nothing more than a mere formal recognition of man's ability to teach, and a mere public permission to exercise his previous ability, like the conferring a degree in a university, or the delivery of a commission in the army?" We are far from saying this. We are far from denying that, in a regular act of ordination, the prayers of the Bishop, the congregation, and the candidate himself, will procure for the person to be ordained the assistance of the Holy Spirit in the discharge of his ministerial

office ;—and such assistance as he who thrusts himself, uncalled, into the place of a teacher cannot be justified in expecting. But it is manifest that an unqualified person seeking ordination (however regular in its outward form) is guilty of gross presumption also ; and that we have no right to expect that God will miraculously supply, *after* ordination, those gifts of natural understanding, and those attainments of acquired skill and learning, which the candidate ought to have *brought with him* to the solemn rite.

To recur, then, to a distinction which we have often made in these papers, because we deem it one of great importance to be understood and remembered—"Authority" to teach publicly in the Church, in the sense of a *legal right* to exercise that function, is given to every ordained person by the act of ordination itself ; but "authority," in the sense of weight or claim to deference, belongs to him only so far as he is qualified to teach, by intellectual and moral fitness ; and of this, ordination should serve as a solemn recognition and outward token. The case is similar in civil offices. The delivery of the Great Seal makes a man Lord Chancellor, and thereby gives him "authority"—that is, a *legal right* to pronounce judgments in Court which shall be binding upon the parties ; but it does not make him a good lawyer. His "opinion" upon any legal question is neither the better nor the worse for his high dignity ; and his "authority," in that sense, is manifestly just the same, the day after he has resigned the seals, as while he held them. But, because we trust that an ignorant lawyer would not be selected for such an office, therefore his promotion to the woolsack, makes even those not familiar with the names of barristers, feel sure that one placed in such a position must be qualified to discharge its duties.

Now, an inference of this kind may be pretty safely made in a free and enlightened country like ours, where the appointment of a notoriously incompetent person to such an office would immediately raise a clamour which no government could stand against. But unhappily it could not be made with equal safety in all countries. Nor could a similar inference be made with equal safety, in the case of ecclesiastical offices, in all Churches, or in the same Church, at all times. Yet you will meet persons, who (from a confusion of thought) entertain the profoundest deference to the decisions of certain ecclesiastical assemblies,

merely because they were composed of *Bishops* ; although history shows that the majority of those Bishops were ignorant or unrighteous men, who decided the questions before them, not by a careful examination of the evidence, but in conformity to party-intrigues or other corrupt influences. And, even apart from corrupt influences or ignorance in the Members of a Council, still its decisions about Articles of Faith, however maturely weighed, can claim small authority (in this sense), if it decide by the application of a false Standard of Doctrine. In such a case the probability will, indeed, be that its decisions are conformable to its standard, but not that they are absolutely true.

The mere *machinery*, then (so to speak), of an Ecclesiastical Body, may be as perfect in an Unscriptural Church as in a Scriptural one, or even more so. Those rules which only regard order, or the preservation of the society itself, immediately, are (as Paley says) “essential to a *good* government, but common to it with many *bad* ones.”

Still, they *are* essential to all governments, and, therefore, it cannot be consistent with christian duty to despise them. Since our Saviour willed that his disciples should not consider themselves so many scattered individuals, but act as members of a society, we are plainly bound to regard, in our conduct, not merely our own best interest, taken separately as single individuals, but the interest of the whole Body. And if it be necessary, for the general interest of the whole Body, that public teachers should be appointed by common authority, in some one particular way, and fixed in particular localities, and governed by some established rules, then it cannot be right for us (except in some case of urgent necessity) to behave as if these things had no existence, or no lawful force.

If we were not members of a church—a religious society—with regularly-appointed teachers, there would be at least no inconsistency in our withdrawing, for very slight reasons, from the ministrations of one person, and availing ourselves of another’s. It would be enough to say, that we liked that other better than the first, or felt ourselves more edified by his lectures. But, as members of a church, we cannot act thus without doing what in us lies to encourage others to do the same ; that is, to chuse for themselves the instructor whom they like best. And it must be obvious, on a moment’s reflection, that if this

principle were fairly carried out—if each congregation, and fraction of a congregation, and individual (for where are we to stop?) had a right to chuse their own Pastors, and change them as often as they pleased, no government could possibly subsist, and such a society must inevitably fall to pieces.

“But are we then *never* justified in withdrawing from a regularly-appointed teacher?” We do not say this, any more than we maintain that children may *never* disobey their parents, nor a wife leave her husband, nor subjects refuse compliance with the orders of their prince. But we say that (as in the cases just mentioned) nothing will justify departure from the general rule but an extreme case. And to define precisely beforehand such cases, is neither very easy, nor very safe; just because they *are* extreme cases.

Meanwhile, remember that the Second-best *with* unity of action, is often preferable to the Best, without it. We have, for example, just been celebrating a happy festival, which all Christendom unites to keep on the 25th of December. Yet many learned men have contended that such was neither the day nor the month of our Lord’s Nativity. Now is it not much better that, whether right or wrong, we should thus all agree to keep that day, than have the Church rent into parties about the true time of Christmas, as it once unfortunately was, about the true time of Easter?

Remember, further, that, in attending the instructions of your Teacher, you do not imply that you assent to everything he says, or, indeed, to anything beyond what he proves. On the contrary, it is the peculiar happiness of our Church that its members are *not* thus dependent upon individual Teachers, or pledged—as members of the Church—to anything but its public and recognised Formularies. And upon these we shall have something more to say in the next Caution.

NOTE TO PAGE 409.

A TRANSLATION of any book is, as we have said, in the most essential point, equivalent to a commentary; for, each gives to the English reader an explanation of the meaning of the original. Some, indeed, seem to understand, by a Commentator on

Scripture, one who gives what he considers a *full* explanation of *everything* contained in all parts of Scripture. But there is no good reason for so limiting the application of the word. Any one who gives his explanation of the meaning of a single sentence, is, as far as he goes, a commentator as *really* (though not to the same *amount*) as one who undertakes to explain the whole Bible.

The difference between what is commonly called a Commentator and a Translator is, that the Commentator lays before us his *reasons* for the interpretation he adopts, and perhaps makes some mention of other and different interpretations; while the Translator only gives what he conceives to be the sense of each passage, and (generally) leaves us to suppose that no one could ever have thought of understanding it in any other sense. We have said "generally," because, in our Authorized Version, the Translators do occasionally, when they are in doubt as to the right rendering of some passage, give one translation in the text, and another in the margin. For instance, in Philippians i. 7, the translation in the text is, "I have you in my heart;" while that in the margin (which is, in this passage, to be preferred) gives a widely different sense—"you have me in your heart." And several other instances of the same kind might be given.

In the Sacred Books (as in all other books) there are several words and sentences which different translators have understood differently, and have accordingly given very different meanings to the passages wherein they occur. It has been so ordered by a kind of providence, that all translations agree in giving the same view of *all the main facts and doctrines* of our religion. And this agreement affords a most satisfactory and consolatory evidence to the mere English reader; since he sees, from the differences as to minor points between the several translators, that there can have been no concert between them. But in several particular passages the general meaning is very considerably affected by the sense in which some of the words are understood. For instance, 2 Pet. i. 20. This passage is usually translated, "no prophecy is of any private interpretation;" by which the English reader understands that no individual must presume to interpret any prophecy, but must acquiesce in whatever sense is put upon it by his Church, or some other Authority.

But some translate the passage, "no prophecy is self-interpreting;"* meaning, that it is to be explained *by the event*. Whichever translation any one may prefer, all must perceive that there is a wide difference in sense.

Again, the passage in John xix. 13, is usually rendered, "Pilate brought in Jesus, and sat down on the judgment-seat . . . and said to the Jews, Behold your King." But some think it ought to be, "Pilate brought in Jesus, and seated Him on the judgment-seat (the Throne) and said, Behold your King." It is urged, in favour of this interpretation, that if Pilate had seated himself on the Throne, and said, Behold your King, the Jews would have understood him as calling *himself* their king; whereas it is plain he was presenting to them Jesus as their King.

All turns on the interpretation of one word; which sometimes—and certainly in most instances—signifies to "sit down," but sometimes also to "seat" another; and it is so rendered in our Version in Eph. i. 20; and also in Eph. ii. 6.

Again, the word *Diathekè* is, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and elsewhere, rendered in our Version, sometimes Testament, as in Hebrews ix. 15, 16, 17; and sometimes "Covenant," as in Hebrews viii. 6.† But some think it should be rendered Covenant throughout. A Testament, they remark, in the sense of a "Will," by which any one bequeaths something to another, was unknown in the Jewish Law. And they remark also that, in the very passage cited in Heb. ix. 20, from the Book of Exodus, the word is rendered Testament, which our translators themselves have, in their version of the Book of Exodus, rendered Covenant. "Behold the blood of the Covenant, which the Lord hath made," &c. Ex. xxiv. 8. Compare with this passage our Lord's words (thus translated) at the last Supper:—"This is my blood of the new Covenant," &c. Matt. xxvi. 28; in which He is evidently referring to the above words of Moses;

* Or "no prophecy is to be interpreted from the very words in which it is written;" (*ἰδιὰς γραφῆς ἐπιλυσιως οὐκ ἔστιν.*)

† If we compare together the old version of Ps. cv. 9, 10, in our Prayer-books with that in our Bibles, it will appear probable that, in old English, *Testament* and *Covenant* were considered equivalent terms. The version in the Prayer-book is, "Even the *Covenant* that He made with Abraham, and the oath that he swore unto Isaac; and appointed the same to Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting *Testament*." Here the same Hebrew word is in one verse translated *Covenant*, and in the next *Testament*,—merely, it would seem, for the sake of variety. In the Bible-version, we have *Covenant* in both places.

though, according to the other way of translating, no such reference is perceived.

They also think that the words in Heb. ix. 5, which are translated "when men are dead," will not at all bear that sense, but signify "over dead bodies;" meaning the bodies of the victims sacrificed (according to ancient practice) at the ratification of all contracts; and that the word which is rendered "testator" should be "ratifier;" *i. e.*—the victim whose death ratified the covenant.

And this translation is certainly more agreeable to the context, as you will see by reading through the whole passage.* But what is to our present purpose, is to point out how much the difference in the translation of a few words affects the general sense.

But we remarked, moreover, that not only a *Translator*, but also in a less degree, an *Editor*, lays before us something of an explanation of what is, in his judgment, the sense of each passage of the original. For (to say nothing of various readings, of which each editor adopts that which in his judgment appears the right one) the *punctuation—parentheses*—the insertion of notes of *interrogation*—and the *accents*—or points of the words, which must affect the sense in Hebrew and Greek,—all these depend on the Editor's judgment. And in many passages the meaning would be greatly altered by a change of punctuation.

For instance, in Heb. x. 12, the old editions of our authorized Version have it thus: "After He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." And this is doubtless the right punctuation, as it agrees best with what had gone before, and with what follows in verse 14. "He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." The writer is evidently contrasting with the Levitical sacrifices, which required continual *repetition*, the sacrifice of Christ "once for all," of which the efficacy was to endure *for ever*. But in many of our Bibles, now, we find the punctuation changed; for we now find it commonly printed, "for ever sat down," &c., which greatly alters the sense.

And again, in Heb. iii. 16, we read, in our Version, "Some when they heard did provoke; howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses."

* See *Lessons on the History of Religious Worship*. L. iv. § 2; and Note A.

Now, you are to observe that the same word (in letters) in the original, signifies either the indefinite "Some" or the interrogative "Who?" according as it is *accented*. Using, then, a different accent, the translation of the passage would stand thus: "Who were they that, when they had heard, did provoke? why, was it not all that came out of Egypt? and with whom was He angry," &c. And this is manifestly the writer's sense.

To take one more instance; we read, in most of the translations of 1 Tim. iii. 15, "the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness, &c." But some think, and not without reason, that there is an error in this punctuation; that there should be a full stop after "Church of God;" and that the beginning of the next sentence should be, "A pillar and ground of the truth, and undeniably great, is the mystery of godliness."

Again, we read in the Epistle to Titus, ii. 11, "The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men:" so it stands in our Version: but the Original will, according as it is punctuated, bear either that sense, or (more easily and naturally) a different one; namely, "There hath appeared the grace of God, bringing salvation to all men."

The above instances (to which many more might be added) are sufficient to illustrate our meaning, in saying that every translator, and indeed every editor, does, and must to a certain extent, *explain*, according to his own judgment, the sense of the original; though without pretending (any more than a commentator) to infallibility of judgment.

True it is that several commentators may adopt the same translation of a passage, while they differ as to the doctrine it is meant to convey. And it is also true that those who agree in the punctuation of a certain passage, may differ in the translation of it. But though one explanation may be more *full* than another, still, the one is as *truly* an explanation as the other. And no one accordingly who reads any book, translated, or edited, by fallible mortals, can say that he has had *no human help* in the study of it.

After all, there are probably none who really do, in practice, attempt to discard all human (and consequently fallible) aid, to the understanding of Scripture; except, indeed, those who pre-

tend to immediate personal inspiration, or who will listen to no instructors but such as profess to speak only as "The Spirit moveth them." But there are others who need a CAUTION against using language likely to be understood differently from their real meaning.

Let no one be afraid to seek, or ashamed of being known to seek, valuable instruction wherever he judges that it may be found. He may do this without paying, or seeming to pay, divine veneration where it is not due. Let him all along protest earnestly against all claims to superhuman infallible authority for mere uninspired men. Let him "prove all things, and hold fast that which" in his own conscientious convictions is "right."

December, 1852.

No. XXIV.

"Let all things be done decently and in order."—1 Cor. xiv. 40.

IT is, we fear, too generally true that all that is required to make men unmindful what they owe to God for any blessing, is that they should receive that blessing often enough and regularly enough. They are ready to recognise the hand of God in any of the *unusual* dispensations of his providence; but with respect to anything which happens every day, they seldom lift their eyes above the subordinate causes. Thus, the survivor of some disastrous shipwreck will be full of gratitude for what he would call his "miraculous deliverance;" while probably, if he had made his voyage without any accident, he would not have dreamed of ascribing his safety to anything but the skill of the captain, and the excellence of the ship he sailed in.

Every one, again, who reads the narrative of our Saviour's miracles is struck with the proofs they exhibit of divine power and divine compassion for human suffering; and yet we are apt to forget that the same compassion is as really, though not as strikingly, displayed, in the *natural* remedies for diseases, which God has provided, and in the success with which He has blessed the labours of those who have studied the means of preventing or curing diseases;—labours which have in these countries perceptibly lengthened the average duration of human life. We are as truly indebted to God for those blessings which He confers on *us* through the instrumentality of others, as were those persons whose sicknesses were banished by the *immediate* presence of the Son of God.

Now, it is precisely in like manner, that when our thoughts turn on the remedies which God has provided for the ignorance and errors of mankind, we are apt to fix our attention exclusively on those remedies in which the hand of God was *directly* manifested;—to think *only* of that information and guidance which

has been afforded men supernaturally. We are bound, however, not to forget our obligations to God for that assistance which his providence has furnished us with, through the agency of other men; and in religious matters in particular, we must remember that our Lord did not merely in his own person communicate a revelation to mankind, but that He also Himself appointed human agency for the preservation of the truths which He had made known.

The remarks which we have just made are directly connected with the subject of the last few Cautions. In these the error which we were warning you against was that of those persons whose incautious language would lead people to set a value too exclusively on those divinely-appointed helps towards the attainment of truth, in which the agency of other men does not prominently appear: thus bringing men to think that if they study the Bible for themselves, with prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they have then made use of *all* the means which God has put within their reach, of attaining a knowledge of his will. In correction of this extreme, we pointed out to you how very much Christians of the present day are indebted to the assistance of other men (whether as editors, or translators, or explainers in other ways) in understanding the meaning of the text of Scripture; and we showed also how useful the help of others is in enabling us to derive from the Scripture-text a system of christian doctrine. We pointed out to you, likewise, that the case is *not* that men's experience has discovered an insufficiency in the written revelation which Christ has left us, and that they have thereupon undertaken to add *unauthorized* human assistance to the means He has appointed; but that, on the contrary, the necessity for the help of others was foreseen and provided for by our Lord Himself; who, by the institution of his church, has furnished this very human instruction of which we had shown the need. We then said that the Church, as well as the help of the Holy Spirit, was the gift of our Lord; but, to avoid all misconception, we would now explain and repeat that by thus naming the two in juxtaposition, we are far from meaning to draw any comparison between the two gifts, or to say that the one was as important as the other; we only meant to rebuke the presumption of those who slight the former of the two, and who expect secret supernatural assistance from God, while neglecting

to employ the ordinary visible aids which He has provided for us.

The next point we dwelt on was the source whence church-teaching was to be derived. And we pointed to Scripture as the only test for the accuracy of church-teaching,—the only source whence any Church could derive its information. We do not admit in any Church the power of making additions of its own to the christian doctrine; its only functions in this matter we believe to be the *preserving* and the publishing of the truths which Christ and his apostles communicated; and, except the Scriptures, we know of no authentic record of their teaching. Just as the moon is useful in reflecting the light of the sun to those to whom he is not directly visible, so, the Church renders important service in communicating light borrowed from the Word of God, to those who might have failed to obtain it thence directly: but were a Church to leave its true place, and to attempt to stand *between* the Scriptures and the People, the result must inevitably be darkness and *eclipse*.

We next proceed to the consideration of the means which a Church can employ in communicating instruction to its members. We may divide the teaching of a Church into two parts, the one fixed, and the other variable. By the fixed part, we mean those statements of the leading doctrines of the Gospel, which a Church may embody in Creeds, or other Confessions of faith, or may constantly bring before the minds of the people in its Services. By the variable part, we mean, detailed expositions of christian doctrine, and explanations of the difficulties which individuals may meet with in their study of the Scriptures,—explanations adapted to the varying wants of each different congregation,—which no Church can furnish otherwise than by setting apart an Order of men recognised as public instructors, whose duty it shall be to acquire for themselves, and to communicate to the People, whatever is needed to aid their private study of the Bible.

It was of this variable part of the Church's instructions that we were speaking in the last Caution. We dwelt on the advantages gained by having an Order of *appointed* teachers;—advantages arising from the importance of having some ready mark to distinguish well-qualified teachers. And we showed that, if the propriety of the existence of such an Order be admitted, it

follows that Christians are not justified in behaving as if there were none such, and in lightly withdrawing from the ministrations of regularly-appointed teachers merely because there may be some other persons (perhaps self-appointed teachers) more to their taste.

In thus insisting on the claims of the appointed teachers of the Church, we may possibly have appeared to some of you unduly to exalt the christian Ministry, and to approach too near the Romish notions of the dignity of the priesthood. But you will perceive, on reflection, that the very reverse is the case. Many of those who pay less deference than we think they ought, to the teaching of Church-officers, do in reality approach, far more than we do, to the Romish notions as to the functions of these officers. For there are some who, while they think themselves quite justified in chusing their *teachers* as they please, would consider it wrong that the public Prayers of the Church should be conducted by any but regularly-ordained clergymen; or who, at any rate, would be shocked to receive the Sacraments from any other. Now, does not this feeling imply a persuasion that it is not teaching, but officiating before God, which forms the distinguishing function of the christian Ministry?

In our Church, indeed,—as in almost all christian Communities,—the administration of the Sacraments is, generally, committed—very naturally and properly—to the clergy. We say “generally,” because with respect to that of Baptism, it is not clearly laid down whether our Reformers meant that lay-baptism should be in any case allowable. But they certainly meant that to baptize should be a part of the Minister’s regular Office; and also that by him the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper should be administered.

Indeed it is a thing so evidently suitable that a Christian-Minister should take the lead in the public Worship, and especially in the most solemn portion of it, the administration of the Sacraments, that one would have naturally expected such a rule to have been always and everywhere observed. Yet when you read Paul’s remarks (1 Cor. xi.) on the disorderly celebration of the Lord’s Supper at Corinth, you can hardly suppose that this Sacrament was there and then administered by the Presbyter. And it is remarkable that he does not rebuke the Corinthians

for *not* having it so administered, but only, in general terms, for disorder and irreverence. He adds to his general admonitions "the rest will I set in order when I come." It is not unlikely that when he did come, he established the rule of committing to the Presbyter—as with us—the conduct of the whole of that Service.

Of the particulars however of his regulations we have no record. And though Church-regulations, not in themselves wrong or at variance with Scripture, are binding on the conscience, through the authority conferred on them by Christ, still, we must not put them on a level with what is expressly laid down in Scripture. Now it is remarkable that all the Apostle Paul says in Epistles to Timothy and Titus, (which is not a little,) of the duties of Christian-Ministers, has reference to the *instruction* of the People, and contains no allusion to the administration of the Sacraments. This seems to indicate at least what he considered as the most *essential* portion of their office.

In the case, indeed, of *heathen* priests, it is true that the offering of sacrifices was *their* sole duty, and that the giving of instruction was no part of their office. And so likewise in the case of the Jewish priests; their peculiar office was the making atonement for the sins of the People; while Jews of any tribe were freely admitted to expound the Scripture in the Synagogues. (See Luke iv., and Acts xiii.) You are aware, also, that in the Romish Church similar views are entertained as to the priestly office, and that what constitutes with them the distinguishing function of the priest is the power of consecrating the Eucharist, and thereby, as they believe, offering up sacrifice for the living and the dead. But it is very remarkable that in the Bible the word *Hiereus* (or sacrificing priest, in Latin, "sacerdos") is applied to no officer of the christian Church, but is reserved for our Lord exclusively. The sacrifice offered on Calvary is expressly declared to be final, and one which needs not to be followed by any other atonement; and the duties ascribed to the christian ministers are not the making atonement for the sins of the People, but the proclaiming the Gospel-Message, and the setting forth of its doctrines. If then we meet with a person who behaves as if he thought that all had equal authority for public teaching, while he acknowledges that all have not equal authority to minister in the public Ordinances of the Church, is

he not unconsciously entertaining views regarding the christian Ministry, more nearly resembling those which the heathens and the Jews held, and which the Romanists still hold, with regard to their priests, than any which can be fairly collected from the New Testament?—that he must consider the priest as one who is to do something with God on his behalf, or in his stead, rather than as one whose principal office is the communicating instruction to the People?

Having added so much to what we said before on the ministers of the Church, we go on to consider what safeguards are provided against erroneous teaching on the part of those to whom our Church has intrusted the duty of instruction. This brings us to what we have called the permanent part of a Church's teaching, such as Liturgies [or forms of prayer] and other Church-formularies.

We remarked, in the last Caution, that there are many matters in civil affairs, which the law determines, just because it is necessary from the nature of the case, that *some* decision should be come to on the points in question. It is so, likewise, in ecclesiastical matters. By a Church, we understand a Body of Christians united by a common belief in the great truths of our religion, and joining together in a common Worship. It is, then, plainly necessary that each Church should decide how that common-worship should be conducted; whether, for example, it should be according to a fixed form, or whether prayers should be offered extemporaneously by the officiating minister. Now, when once a point of this kind has been settled by competent public authority, it is no longer open to an individual member of the community to act as if it had been left undecided.* Nor is an individual member of a christian community justified in refusing to comply with its ordinances, even if he be of opinion, and rightly of opinion, that those ordinances were not the very wisest and most judicious that might have been made. But as this is a point which is often mistaken, it may perhaps be of use to say something as to the general bindingness of Church-regulations.

A Church then, like any other community, has clearly the

* In the Kirk of Scotland, indeed, the matter *has* been left undecided: a Form of Prayer being provided, but the minister left to use it or not, at his own discretion. The consequence has been that now no one uses it; though many seem to wish for its revival, or the introduction of some other similar form.

power of making rules, both for its own preservation, and also for the furtherance of the objects for which it was formed. We have no ground for supposing that our Lord, or his Apostles, at the first institution of the Church, arranged once for all the details of Church-government and Church-services. It seems, indeed, almost impossible that they should then provide minute regulations adapted to the various exigencies not only of the different nations among whom the Gospel was to be preached, but also of the many successive generations who should receive it. And certainly the Bible contains no record of their having done so. On all these points, then, on which superior authority has defined nothing, and yet which it is necessary should be settled in *some* way, a Church must necessarily lay down rules; and no other proof of its power to do so is required than the fact, that our Lord desired his disciples to form *societies*; each of which, of course, He must have intended should possess all the powers necessary for its permanent existence. An individual member therefore of a christian community who, without cogent reasons, refuses to submit to its regulations, does, as far as in him lies, strive to *break up* that community, and does his part to reduce a christian society to resemble a heap of loose sand, instead of forming (as their Lord designed they should) one harmonious, well-compacted Body.

If it be asked, what is the limit to the obedience which a Church is entitled to demand from each of its members, we cannot assign any, so long as the regulations which it makes be not contrary to the law of God. To insist (as some of the extreme Puritans formerly did) upon scripture-warrant for every Church-regulation, is the same thing as to maintain that though Christ and his Apostles had the power to frame rules for the direction of the Church, yet the Church itself has no power to supply regulations in any of those cases which the Scripture has left unprovided for. And the same low view as to Church-authority is implied in the solicitude of those persons of a very opposite opinion, who have been anxious to trace up to the Apostles all the principal ordinances of our Church, as if there could be no other sufficient warrant. The views of our own Church, however, on this subject, are clearly expressed in the Twentieth Article; in which, while it is distinctly acknowledged that a Church cannot enforce any DOCTRINE not contained in

Scripture, to be believed as necessary to salvation, it yet claims for the Church a power to decree *rites and ceremonies*; only limited by the condition that it shall not "ordain anything that is *contrary* to God's Word."*

Again, we say that an individual is not justified in refusing obedience to Church-regulations merely because they are not, in his view, the *most* wise and judicious, provided that he do not believe them to be positively unlawful; not that a Church is justified in making regulations arbitrarily, and without any regard to their expediency. On the contrary, it is the duty of the rulers of a Church, when framing its ordinances, carefully to provide that they be such as shall most tend to the edification and spiritual benefit of the People. But then, if on this point differences of opinion exist—as will almost always be the case—a community cannot be expected either to do without rules until rules can be found in which no one can wish anything altered, nor again, to pass rules binding *only* on those of its members who *like* them. It must form such rules as the heads of the Society believe to be, on the whole, the most expedient; leaving it to any member who disapproves of them, to weigh the inconveniences of submitting to them, against those of separating from the Society. But, at the same time, it will be remembered that we acknowledged, in a former Caution (No. XX., p. 373), the right of any member of a christian community to endeavour to obtain such an alteration of its regulations as, on mature reflection, he deems desirable, by laying his reasons and suggestions before the governors of that Body. By taking this course he may be the means of enabling the society to fulfil the purposes for which it was formed, more efficiently than it had done before; while, if he were irregularly to introduce whatever occurred to him as an improvement, he would only set an example of disorder, run the risk of causing divisions, and by thus endangering the existence of the society, would *diminish* its power to effect the ends for which it had been formed.

Now to apply these remarks to the subject before us. We have seen that a Church must come to some decision on the question, whether it will prescribe a fixed plan for the public Services of the congregation, or whether it will leave the mode of conducting these Services to the discretion of the officiating

* Or (as is expressed in Art. xxxiv.), repugnant to the Word of God.

minister. Now, supposing the Church-authorities to have come to the conclusion that the latter course is inexpedient, it follows from what we have said, that, in order to justify their decision, we have no need to make out any Scripture-proof of the preferableness of preconceived forms of prayer. It follows, also, that a clergyman who might be persuaded (even with good reason) that he could himself conduct the Services of his congregation in a more edifying manner than that prescribed to him, would still not be warranted in departing from the appointed Form. For if *one* were at liberty to deviate from it, so would be any other; and the mode of conducting the Service would be left to the discretion of each minister, just in the same manner as if the Church had had no power to prescribe any forms at all.

But while we contend that the use of a precomposed Liturgy, from the mere fact of its being the appointment of our Church, ought to be acquiesced in by all her members, we believe also that very good reasons can be given for the course actually taken by our Church. That forms of prayer were in use among the Jews;—that our Lord himself supplied his disciples with a form of prayer expressed in the plural number, and evidently intended for joint-worship;—and that forms of prayer appear to have been used in the primitive Church as far back as we have any accurate information—this is at least sufficient to show that forms of prayer are not unlawful, and that a member of our Church may with a safe conscience conform to her rule on this subject. But, moreover, great weight seems due to the consideration that it is to *joint* prayer that our Lord has given especial assurance of a gracious hearing:—it is to the prayers of those who shall “*agree together* touching something they shall ask in his name.” Now it certainly seems, in most cases, impossible for uninspired men to “*agree together*” in a prayer offered up by one of them, if they do not know, at least the substance of it, beforehand, and if they have to learn what the prayer is at the moment of its being uttered. It may reasonably be doubted therefore whether extemporaneous prayer, though it may be used *in* a congregation, can be used *by* a congregation. When, indeed, they are accustomed to hear from the same minister, Sunday after Sunday, the same prayer repeated, with only a few slight verbal variations, there is no doubt they may join in it as well

as if it had been written down ; but this is precisely because it is *not* really extemporaneous. And again, if a prayer delivered extempore contain none but very familiar topics, very simply and judiciously expressed, and each expression be repeated two or three times with little or no variation, and be recited very slowly, those of the congregation who are tolerably quick of apprehension will generally be able to take it in sufficiently to join in it, and make it their own. But, for the most part, a large proportion of the hearers, if not all of them, have their minds occupied in taking in the sense of each sentence that is uttered, till their attention is called to the next sentence ; and thus they are deceived, and most hurtfully deceived, into imagining that they are themselves praying when, in fact, they are at best only overhearing another person praying.

We have said "at best," because we are convinced, that oftener than not, the minister is deceived no less than the People, and imagines himself to be praying, when in reality he is delivering what may be called an oblique sermon—when he is addressing himself not to God, but to the congregation ; and conveying to them, under the form of a prayer, the doctrines and sentiments,—the exhortations and reproofs,—which he wishes to impress on their minds. We believe that the greater part of those who have had the requisite experience in this matter, can testify, that, generally speaking, what is called extemporary prayer in a congregation, is both uttered and listened to much more as a sermon to the people, than as a joint supplication to the Deity. Now to what purpose will a clergyman admonish his people as to the duty of prayer, and remind them of the promises made by our Saviour to joint-prayer, if he lead them to fancy that they are fulfilling this branch of duty when in fact they are not,—to deceive themselves with a belief that they are praying, when they are only listening to the prayer of another, or to a hortatory discourse couched in the form of a prayer ?

It may be added, that some of the abuses to which sermons are liable, present themselves in a more offensive shape in the case of those oblique sermons which are expressed in the form of prayers. We do not speak merely of the inconvenience of so large a proportion of the edification of the congregation being dependent on the ability and discretion of the officiating

minister; although, no doubt, a well-prepared Liturgy is likely to be more judiciously framed than the generality of extemporary prayers; and although, as things are, we may occasionally have reason to be thankful to our Liturgy that there is so much of our Service which cannot be spoiled, and so much of what is said in church which we can be sure of, as of an edifying character. But we rather refer to the case of ministers who possess more than ordinary abilities; and who, if in their sermons they are sometimes exposed to the danger of "preaching themselves, and not Christ Jesus," must feel the same temptation in even a more dangerous degree in the case of their public Prayers. It is bad enough, if, in a sermon, a preacher, instead of thinking how he may benefit his hearers, thinks how he may attract their admiration; but it is surely worse, if a clergyman offering *prayer* be led away from thinking of God to think of his hearers,—if he be tempted, instead of praying, to exhibit "a gift of prayer," and if, while professing to humble himself before God, his mind be occupied in seeking for eloquent terms in which to make his professions of humility.

And there is a corresponding danger to his hearers. We know how many of those who go to hear sermons go to criticise or to admire, rather than with an earnest and single-minded hope to profit by what they hear. As far back as the time of Ezekiel, we find that people were in the habit of regarding the addresses of God's ministers as a source of intellectual gratification, instead of as a means for their spiritual improvement. (Ezek. xxxiii. 32.) "Lo thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not." Now just as prayer, in which we draw nigh to God, is a more solemn act than the listening to the address of a fellow-creature, so is the profanation of the former ordinance more offensive than the abuse of the latter; and we think, therefore, that this alone would constitute a serious objection to the use of extemporaneous prayer in a public congregation; that, at a time when the thoughts of the People ought to be turned towards Him whom they are addressing, they are in danger of being drawn aside to pass judgment on the prayers considered as an intellectual performance of the minister who conducts their devotions.

It would open too wide a field were we to speak of all the

abuses of extemporaneous prayer which may arise from the indiscretion or intemperance of those who conduct it; yet there is one of those abuses which, as we believe it to be far from uncommon, it may be well to mention. The parting command of our Lord to his People was, that they should "love one another;" and there can be no more natural expression of their mutual love than intercessions for each other at the throne of their common Father. Intercessory prayer, therefore, forms a proper part of the public devotions of the Church. Yet when an indiscreet man arises publicly to ask God to forgive other people's sins, there is great danger lest his prayer should degenerate (not now into an oblique *sermon* for the instruction of his hearers, but) into oblique sarcasm* or invective designed to confute or to annoy those who differ from him in opinion. And the same effect may be produced even when the prayer appears, in its form, to include the officiating minister and his congregation; for example, if he implore of God to forgive the sins of the *nation* in passing such and such laws,—laws, perhaps, which he himself and the majority of his hearers disapproved, and had opposed. In such a case it is plain, that their prayers for themselves include no confession of their own sins, but are merely intended to avert from them the danger which they suppose they have incurred through the wickedness of others. There can be little doubt that prayers of the kind here alluded to, do not tend to edification. The feelings they produce in those who utter them, are not humility, not love to their brethren, but rather scornful feelings towards others, and complacency with themselves, such as were implied in the Pharisee's *prayer*—"God, I thank thee that I am not as other men." While, again, those who may be present, of the party whose opinions are assailed in the prayer, instead of feeling grateful for the love which induced their brother to intercede for them, are likely to be only provoked at being attacked in a way to which they can make no reply, and at being made themselves to seem

* In *Fraser's Magazine* for November, 1852, p. 521, it is given as an instance of the dry humour of a popular American preacher, that when some steps were once taken by his Government of which he strongly disapproved, he introduced into his public prayers the following petition: "O Lord, grant that we may not despise our rulers, and grant that they may not act so that we cannot help it." Without declaring ourselves absolute enemies to wit and humour, we confess that we do not feel the least regret that the clergy of our church have not the opportunity of displaying these qualities in their prayers.

to join in their own condemnation; and the result is, probably, a state of mind almost exactly the opposite of what ought to be that of those engaged in prayer.

We have already said more than enough to justify the choice which our Church has made, of written forms, in preference to extemporaneous public prayer. We have laid before you the abuses to which the latter is liable; its greater tendency to distract the minds of the congregation with thoughts unsuited to the act of prayer;—the antiquity of prescribed forms in the primitive Church,—and the sanction given to the use of them by our Lord Himself. And especially we have pointed out, that it is through these almost exclusively that a congregation can come to that solemn deliberate *agreement* in their petition, to which our Lord has peculiarly promised acceptance. We will add, however, one additional use of prescribed forms of prayer—that one which we had more particularly in view when we introduced the subject.

You will remember that our subject was the office of a Church in communicating religious truth, and the means which it might employ in discharging that office. We had spoken of the authorized teachers who are set apart for this purpose in almost every Christian community. And we had begun to speak of the safeguards which it is necessary to provide in order to ensure that these teachers should continue to set forth the same doctrines which were originally committed to them. The necessity of such safeguards is proved by a very little acquaintance with the history of those christian communities which have endeavoured to dispense with them.

The principles which Calvin thought of greatest importance, gradually and silently evaporated at Geneva, and were replaced by barefaced Socinianism. And much the same thing happened with many of the English and Irish Presbyterians, and of the American Congregationalists.

Now, how are we to suppose such a change was effected, as we know must have taken place, when we see Arians or Socinians in possession of meeting-houses built by sincere believers in the Divinity of our Lord? If a minister were abruptly to preach Socinianism to a congregation which had previously been accustomed to hear the contrary doctrine constantly impressed on them, though he might indeed make some converts to his

views, he certainly would not convert them all; and the result would be a controversy and schism, such as we do not read of in the history of those Bodies of which we are speaking. But, in order to bring about such a *silent* change as we know did take place, the doctrines which were eventually lost must have been long kept out of sight, before they were denied. A teacher leaning towards Socinianism would begin, not with direct attacks on the doctrine of our Lord's Divinity, but by filling his discourses with observations on the shortness of life, the beauty of virtue, and such like topics; *omitting* the doctrines to which he is opposed; and it is only after a time, when these doctrines have ceased to hold a prominent place in the minds of the People, that they may be safely assailed directly.

Now, it is remarkable that the communities alluded to, in which a cardinal doctrine of the Gospel was lost, agreed in dispensing with written Forms of prayer. And it is plain that the use of such Forms would in many cases render the process which we have just described impossible. Were a minister of our Church, for example, to endeavour to "*reserve*" the doctrine of the Atonement (as some of the Tract party have recommended him to do),* or to keep back any other fundamental doctrine of the Gospel, he might indeed leave it out of his sermons, but it would still remain in the prayers. He could not impose on the Liturgy the reserve which he desired to practise himself. And supposing even that an unfaithful minister had caused his people to lose their hold of these fundamental doctrines, and had brought them to listen to those expressions of the Liturgy which implied them, as if they were unmeaning sounds, and had so made his congregation unconscious Arians or Socinians; yet the Liturgy, if retained, would at any time be an instrument in the hands of an orthodox successor, to enable him to repair the evil which had been done. For then, when he preached to them the doctrines which had been long kept in the background, he could appeal to the expressions which they had been continually using, to prove that "he was not bringing *strange* things to their ears." The evidence supplied by these Forms in favour of these doctrines, though it may be unnoticed for a time, remains ready to produce its effect the moment they are discussed; so much so, that in the case we are considering (the case, namely, of a congregation

* See Caution XII.

possessed of orthodox forms of prayer, but allowed, by a negligent teacher, to lose sight of Gospel-doctrine), the lectures of an avowed Socinian might actually be productive of more good than harm. They might, indeed, make a few *professed* Socinians, who had been unconscious Socinians already; but they would probably, in many more cases, produce the inquiry, which is all that was necessary to bring them back to sounder views.

Another safeguard—Creeds and Confessions of Faith—which a Church may also employ as a check upon erroneous teaching, will here naturally occur to your mind. And on that subject we shall offer a few short remarks in the next Caution.

January, 1853.

No. XXV.

“ Symbolum tessera est et signaeulum, quo inter fideles perfidosque secernitur.”

Maximus Taurinensis.

“ A Creed is a token and sign, to distinguish between true believers and misbelievers.”

IN the last Caution we laid before you some remarks on what are called the Formularies of our Church ; and, in particular, on the Liturgy—the form of public worship in a congregation ; which is called the “ *Common-Prayer*,” (in the words of Chrysostom, “ common supplications,”)—that is, *joint*-prayer, as being that in which the People can “ *agree* together, touching something they shall ask,” as our Lord seems to have designed. (See Caution No. XXIV., p. 428.) And we pointed out some of the advantages of such Forms over extemporary Prayers in a congregation.

Other Formularies there are (as we there remarked) in our own Church and in many others, besides prayers ; such as Exhortations, Catechisms, Creeds, &c.

It is not necessary, however, for our present purpose, to enter on any full examination of all, or any, of these ; but there is one circumstance relating to what are called Creeds, which we think it important to remark upon ; which is, that the original design and essential character of those Compositions are, by some persons, quite misapprehended.

That kind of Composition which is sometimes called a “ *Creed*,” sometimes a “ *Symbol*,” or “ *Articles of Religion*,” or a “ *Confession of Faith*,” (for all these are equivalent expressions,) is not designed as a summary of all the essential points of christian Faith, but only of those that have been denied or perverted by false teachers, in that Age and Country for which the Creed is drawn up. It is not intended, principally, as a form of *instruction* or explanation, but rather as a *safeguard* against religious errors, and especially against those most prevalent. And hence it is that besides the Creeds now in use, we find records (in the

Works of ancient christian Writers) of several others formerly used in particular Churches. In their christian Faith these ancient Churches did not differ; but the Creeds [Symbols] which they adopted were different, with a view to oppose the particular heresies from which each was most in danger.

We observed in a former CAUTION (No. XXIII., p. 407), that the provisions made by any Church (and the same holds good of every kind of Society) belong to two classes; (1) provisions for effecting the great ultimate *object* of a Church, the instruction and spiritual edification of its members, and (2) for *self-preservation*. Now Creeds belong properly not to the first, but to the second of these classes. They were drawn up not with a view to the *instruction* of the People in the first rudiments of their religion, but for the *exclusion* of some prevalent false doctrines, such as would render a person unfit to belong to the Church that provides this safeguard.

For, the very notion of a *Church* implies the acknowledgment of certain doctrines. For instance, it would be impossible for men to be united in public Worship, of whom, some held that Christ ought to be addressed in prayer, and others, that such prayers are superstitious and idolatrous.

Hence, we may expect to find a Creed sometimes *omitting* all mention of some important Articles of faith; not because the framers of that Creed *did not hold* them, but because these doctrines were not, at that time, a matter of *dispute*. The Apostles' Creed, the earliest that has come down to us, is a remarkable instance of this. It makes no mention of the doctrine of the Atonement; stating distinctly that Jesus Christ actually *died*, but not that He died for *our redemption*. And accordingly, Socinians (who deny the doctrine of the Atonement) may, and do, use this Creed. And some of them infer, from the omission, that this doctrine was not believed in the earliest Churches.

Now this inference would be a fair one, if we supposed this Creed to have been drawn up as a summary of the fundamental Articles of the christian Faith. But it can be plainly proved, by the testimony of many ancient Authors, that the doctrine *was* held in their times. The cause of its not being mentioned in that Creed, was, that it was not, in those days, a point on which, any *dispute* turned. The heresy *then* most prevalent,

and which was guarded against in that Creed, was, the strange notion (still held by the Mahometans), that Jesus was not *really put to death*, but that the eyes of his enemies, and of his disciples, were deluded by a phantom. Thence it became necessary to assert distinctly the reality of his death. No one who admitted this, at all doubted (in those days) *for whom* He died. But in later times, it was found needful to guard against a new heresy; and accordingly we find inserted in the Nicene Creed, that "He was crucified *for us*."

Again, the assertion in the earliest Creeds, that "God is the Maker of heaven and earth," was needed in those days as a safeguard against those ancient heretics called the Gnostics, who denied this, and taught that the world was created not by the Supreme God, but by an inferior Being.

You will easily perceive how very important it is to take this right view of the character and design of a Creed; since else, you might be led into the most dangerous mistakes, and draw a conclusion just opposite to the true one. An important doctrine left unmentioned by the framers of the Creed, precisely because it was universally *acknowledged*, you might suppose to have been omitted because universally *unknown*.

And the observations just made are the more necessary, because we know it to be the practice not only of Roman-catholics, but of some Protestants, to repeat the Apostles' Creed in their *private devotions*, as if it were a prayer; thus showing an entire misapprehension of the whole character of such a composition.

And here it is worth remarking, by the way, what a striking instance of divine wisdom and goodness is presented to us, in the *absence*, from Scripture, of all such Formularies as we have been speaking of;—the total omission, throughout the New Testament, of Catechisms, Creeds, and Liturgies. You will perceive on a little reflection that this circumstance, which, at the first glance, seems very strange, affords a strong internal evidence of the divine origin of Christianity; and also was wisely designed for the spiritual exercise and training of the Christian's mind.

1. We have in the New Testament, accounts of the miracles, and of the teaching, of the Lord Jesus, and of many of the "Acts" of the Apostles; and we have several of their Epistles to their converts. But these Epistles were addressed (as was

remarked in Caution XXI., p. 382) to those who had already been taught the rudiments of the Faith, and, after due examination, had been baptised into the Church. We find in the New Testament nothing of the character of the *Catechisms*, such as we are sure must have been employed for instructing learners in the first rudiments of Christianity; nor again do we find any thing of the nature of a *Creed*, as above-described; nor a *Liturgy*; nor any thing answering to a *Rubric* (or set of Canons), prescribing the mode of administering the Sacraments, and of conducting all parts of the Church-Service; nor any precise description of the manner of *ordaining* Ministers, and of carrying on *Church-government*.

Yet all these things, we are sure, must have existed. We even find frequent mention of *prayers* offered up by Apostles; and of their "breaking bread" [celebrating the Lord's Supper] in the congregations. But the prayers which they used, on these and on other occasions, are not recorded. And it is very remarkable that the *only two* prayers of the Apostles that we do find recorded in words, had reference to such *peculiar occasions* (the election of an Apostle, in i. Acts, and their first persecution, iv. Acts) as made them quite *unsuitable for ordinary public worship*.* The same may be said of the prayer of the first martyr, Stephen; and also of those prayers of Jesus Himself which are recorded in John's Gospel. One short form of prayer which our Lord taught to his disciples—and that, before the chief part of the Gospel had been revealed—is all that we find recorded.

Now that no Liturgies, Creeds, or other Formularies, such as we have been speaking of, should have been committed to writing by any of the Apostles or Evangelists, is a fact which will appear to you the more unaccountable,—humanly speaking,—the more you reflect on the subject. Supposing Paul to have been too much occupied with other writings to find leisure for recording such things, why was it not done, by his direction or permission, by one or other of his companions and assistants?—by Luke, or Timothy, or Titus, or some of the others whom

* The same is the case, in a less degree, with the three Hymns, that of Zacharias, that of the Virgin Mary, and that of Symeon, which are introduced from the New Testament into our Service. They had, each, reference to a peculiar occasion, but not to such a degree as to unfit them altogether for ordinary Worship; for which they have been adopted accordingly.

we find mentioned? If not by any of these, why not by Barnabas, or Peter, or some other Apostle? or by some of their numerous fellow-labourers?

There must have been hundreds quite competent to the task; which would have been merely to write down what they saw and heard; and this would have been eagerly read by thousands, and carefully copied and preserved. Yet what it would have been, seemingly, so natural and so easy to do, by each of a great number of men, was done *by no one*.

And as the drawing up of such records is what would naturally have occurred to men of *any* nation, situated as the Apostles and their companions were, so, it seems doubly strange that this should not have occurred to *Jews*; to men brought up under that Law which prescribed with such minute exactness all the ceremonials of their worship,—all the Articles of their belief,—and all the rules they were to observe.

The omission, therefore, which we have been speaking of is, on all natural principles, quite unaccountable, and, indeed, incredible. And there seems no way of explaining it, except by concluding that the Apostles and their attendants were *super-naturally* restrained from drawing up any such written records as we have been speaking of. We must conclude that divine Providence had decreed that no Canons, Liturgies, or Creeds, &c., should form any part of Holy Scripture; and that, accordingly, the inspired Writers were withheld from committing any to paper.

And in confirmation—if any confirmation could be needed—of what we have now been saying, we find that soon *after* the Age of inspiration, and when men were left to act on their own judgment, they did draw up Creeds (several of which have come down to us), Liturgies, and directions for the celebration of divine Worship, called the “Apostolical Constitutions.” Pliny records the custom of the Christians in his day (in the early part of the second century), of singing “a hymn to Christ as God.” This is supposed by some to have been that which we call the “Te Deum,” or some portion of it. But at any rate it must have been *something written down* and learnt by the congregation. Whatever may be urged in behalf of extemporary *prayers*, a *hymn* at least could not be so. And these compositions, though professing to be records of what had come down by tradition

from the times of the Apostles (which is, probably, in part true), were never received by any Church as Holy Scripture.* Now, one would have expected, as most probable (humanly speaking), that *many* compositions of this kind, drawn up by *several* of the Apostles and their numerous attendants, would have come down to us as a portion of the New Testament.

But that no *one* of them should have committed to writing anything of the kind, is, according to the ordinary course of nature, quite incredible.

We have here, therefore, in this omission, a standing *miracle*;—at least, a *monument* of a miracle. The christian Scriptures, considered in this point of view, are in themselves a proof of their having been composed under superhuman guidance; since they do *not* contain what we may be certain they *would* have contained, had the Writers been left to themselves.

And the argument, you should observe, is complete, even though we should be quite unable to perceive the *wisdom* of this ordinance of Providence, or at all to conjecture *why* the sacred Writers were thus withheld from doing what they must naturally have been disposed to do. For if the gospel was *not* from *man*, it must have been from God. Though we may not be able always to explain why the christian Scriptures are, in each point, just such as they are, still, if we can perceive them to be such as they certainly would *not* have been if composed by unaided Man, we must conclude that the Writers were divinely overruled.

In the present case, however, we do find it possible to perceive, on attentive reflection, the divine wisdom displayed in thus overruling the sacred Writers.

If the Hymns and forms of Prayer,—the Catechisms,—the Confessions of faith,—and the Ecclesiastical regulations, which the Apostles employed, had been recorded by themselves or their attendants, these would have all been regarded as parts of

* Even the Church of Rome, which pronounces all traditions sanctioned by itself, of equal authority with Scripture, still maintains the distinction. It has never *inserted* in the *New Testament* any of those compositions we have been speaking of. And here we have, by the way, a testimony which would, alone, completely refute the wild theory of some (so-called) Theologians, that the New Testament was a compilation drawn up in the third or fourth Century from floating Traditions. It would be a sufficient answer (though many other disproofs might be given), to remark, that in that case it could not have failed to contain the Liturgies, Apostolic Constitutions, &c., which were then in circulation;—and in circulation with a *tradition of their being derived from the Apostles*.

Scripture: and even had they been accompanied by the most express declarations of the lawfulness of altering or laying aside any of them, we cannot doubt that they would have been, in practice, most scrupulously retained, even when changes of manners, tastes, and local and temporary circumstances of every kind, rendered them no longer the most suitable. The Jewish ritual, designed for one Nation and Country, and intended to be of temporary duration, was fixed and accurately prescribed: the same divine Wisdom from which both Dispensations proceeded, having designed Christianity for all Nations and Ages, left Christians at large in respect of those points in which variation might be desirable.

And we may be sure,—as has been said,—that if they *had* recorded the particulars of their own Worship, the very words they wrote would have been invested, in our minds, with so much sanctity, that it would have been thought presumptuous to vary or to omit them, however inappropriate they might have become. The Lord's Prayer, the only one of general application that is recorded in the Scriptures, though so framed as to be suitable in all Ages and Countries, has yet been subjected to much superstitious abuse. The Romanist mutters his "pater-nosters," as a kind of sacred charm, on all occasions, however inappropriate. And our Reformers, probably in concession to a prevailing feeling that no devotions could be acceptable without it, have introduced it into every one of the Services they drew up.*

With respect to Catechisms again,—elementary introductions to the christian Faith,—nearly the same reasons will hold good. For though the Christian-religion is fundamentally "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," it is impossible that any one mode of introducing its truths to the mind of a learner can be the best adapted for children and adults,—the civilized and the barbarian,—and for all the other varieties of station, sex, country, intellectual culture, and natural capacity.

Each church, therefore, was left, through the wise foresight of Him who alone "knows what is in Man," to provide for its own wants as they should arise;—to steer its own course by the

* The Decalogue also, a portion of the Mosaic Law, is introduced into our Service, to the exclusion of any compositions that might have been drawn up, of a corresponding character, but more distinctly evangelical, and thus more completely appropriate to a christian congregation.

Chart and Compass which his holy Word supplies, regulating for itself the Sails and Rudder, according to the winds and currents it may meet with.

The Apostles themselves, however, and their numerous fellow-labourers, would not, we may be sure, have been, if left to themselves, so far-sighted as to perceive (all, and each of them, without a single exception) the expediency of this procedure. Most likely, many of them, but according to all human probability, some of them, would have left us, as parts of *Scripture*, compositions such as we have been speaking of ; and these, there can be no doubt, would have been scrupulously retained for ever. They would have left us Catechisms, which would have been like precise directions for the cultivation of some plant, admirably adapted to a particular soil and climate, but inapplicable in those of a contrary description : their Symbols would have stood like ancient sea-walls, built to repel the encroachments of the waves, and still scrupulously kept in repair, when perhaps the sea had retired from them many miles, and was encroaching on some different part of the coast.

There are multitudes, even as it is, who do not, even now, perceive the expediency of the omission ; there are not a few who even now complain of it as a defect, or even make it a ground of objection. That in that day, the reasons for the procedure actually adopted, should have occurred, and occurred to *all* the first Christians, supposing them mere unassisted men, and men too brought up in Judaism, is utterly incredible.

But besides the reason we have now been speaking of, there is another, perhaps not less important, against the providing in *Scripture* of a regular systematic statement of christian doctrines. Supposing such a summary of Gospel-truths had been drawn up, and could have been contrived with such exquisite skill as to be sufficient and well-adapted for all, of every Age and Country, what would have been the probable result ? It would have commanded the unhesitating assent of all Christians, who would, with deep veneration, have stored up the very words of it in their memory, without any need of laboriously searching the rest of the *Scriptures*, to ascertain its agreement with them ; which is what we do (at least are evidently *called on* to do) with a *human* exposition of the Faith ; and the absence of this labour, together with the tranquil security as to the correctness of their

belief, which would have been thus generated, would have ended in a careless and contented apathy. There would have been no room for doubt,—no call for vigilant attention in the investigation of truth,—none of that effort of mind which is now requisite, in comparing one passage with another, and collecting instruction from the scattered, oblique, and incidental references to various doctrines in the existing Scriptures; and, in consequence, none of that excitement of the best feelings, and that improvement of the heart, which are the natural, and doubtless the designed result of an humble, diligent, and sincere study of the christian Scriptures.

In fact, all *study*,—properly so called,—of the rest of Scripture,—all lively interest in its perusal,—would have been nearly superseded by such an inspired Compendium of doctrine; to which alone, as by far the most convenient for that purpose, habitual reference would have been made, in any question that might arise. Both would have been regarded, indeed, as of divine authority; but the Compendium, as the fused and purified metal; the other, as the mine containing the crude ore. And the Compendium itself, being not, like the existing Scriptures, that *from which* the faith is to be learned, but *the very thing to be learned*, would have come to be regarded by most with an indolent, unthinking veneration, which would have exercised little or no influence on the character. Their orthodoxy would have been, as it were, petrified; like the bodies of those animals we read of incrustated in the ice of the polar regions; firm-fixed, indeed, and preserved unchangeable, but cold, motionless, lifeless. It is only when our energies are roused, and our faculties exercised, and our attention kept awake, by an ardent pursuit of truth, and anxious watchfulness against error,—when, in short, we feel ourselves to be doing something towards acquiring, or retaining, or improving our knowledge,—it is then only, that that knowledge makes the requisite practical impression on the heart and on the conduct.

To the Church then has her all-wise Founder left the office of *teaching*, to the Scriptures, that of *proving*, the christian doctrines; to the Scriptures He has left the delineation of christian *principles*; to each Church, the *application* of those principles, in their Symbols or Articles of religion,—in their Forms of Worship,—and in their Ecclesiastical Regulations.

Against such compositions (for some of which there must always be need) drawn up by *uninspired* writers, the objections which would have existed against their forming a part of *Scripture*, do not lie: First, because we need not scruple to *alter* them from time to time, as occasions may require; and, secondly, because the very circumstance of their being not inspired calls on us diligently to search the Scriptures, and affords a wholesome exercise to our minds in comparing the compositions of fallible men with the records of inspiration. How admirable do the provisions of divine wisdom appear, even from the slight and indistinct views we obtain of it! It has supplied us by Revelation with the knowledge of what we could not have discovered for ourselves; and it has left us to ourselves precisely in those points in which it is best for us that we should be so left.

We may however perversely refuse to take advantage of these wise provisions, by exalting, like the Romanists, the Creeds, Formularies, &c., which are sanctioned by Tradition, and by the enactments of a Church, to a level with the Scriptures. Then indeed we incur the evils already spoken of, with the additional one of "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." The system of the Church of Rome, accordingly, tends to foster that neglect of the study of Scriptures,—that averseness to labour in the investigation of truth,—that indolent, uninquiring acquiescence in what is ready prepared for acceptance, in the lump,—to which Man is by nature so much disposed, and which the structure of the christian Scriptures seems to have been expressly designed to guard against. And all this evil is incurred by reliance on an infallibility which after all is only imaginary.

If we would be Protestants, in spirit, and not merely in name, we must be careful to keep each class of compositions to its own proper use: let Catechisms, Homilies, in short, works of *christian instruction*, be employed for instruction; Liturgies, and other devotional works for *devotional* purposes;—Symbols or Articles of Faith, for *their* proper purpose, to furnish, in conjunction with the others, (for all the authorised Formularies of a Church partake, in some degree, of the character of these,) a *test* of any one's fitness to be received as a member, or a Minister, of each Church, respectively: and let the Scriptures, and the Scriptures only, be appealed to for a decision on questions of doctrine. It is their peculiar province to furnish *proofs*.

We may call in indeed the aid of learned and judicious, but uninspired authors, in cases where doubts have been raised as to the true sense of Scripture; but we must always appeal to these, along with,—in *connexion* with,—and in *subservience* to, the Sacred Writings.

As for the Formularies and the Regulations of our own Church,—or indeed of any Church,—to say that they are the work of uninspired, and consequently fallible men, is to say that it would be most unreasonable to expect perfection in them. That they should be, on the whole, agreeable to Scripture and edifying to the People, is as much as we can fairly look for. But it is important to keep in mind the following considerations:

(1.) First, that even supposing all our Ordinances and Church-Services had been actually the work of an inspired Apostle, and consequently quite perfect, in reference to the time and place for which they were designed, still, they could not have been (as we have already remarked) equally suitable for all Ages and Countries.

(2.) We should also remember, that, even at any one given time and place, no Liturgy, &c., could be the *very best-adapted* for each person of all different classes,—young people and adults,—the educated and the uneducated,—and those of different tempers and habits of thought. What we must look for, is, that which shall be, *on the whole*, the most edifying to a *mixed* congregation.

(3.) We should consider moreover that even had our Formularies been dictated by direct inspiration, still they would have been open to cavilling objections. Those who are on the look out for something to censure, perversely endeavouring to put the most unfavourable interpretation on every expression, will generally be successful in their search.* And accordingly

* “We are fully persuaded in our judgments (and we here profess it to the world), that the Book, as it stood before established by Law, doth not contain in it anything contrary to the Word of God, or to sound Doctrine, or which a godly man may not with a good conscience use and submit unto, or which is not fairly defensible against any that shall oppose the same; if it shall be allowed such just and favourable construction as in common equity ought to be allowed to all human writings, especially such as are set forth by authority, and even to the very best translations of the Holy Scripture itself.”—*Preface to the Common Prayer*. It is worth while here to remark, that persons who, having been brought up dissenters, have, at mature age, joined our Church on conscientious conviction, are usually the greatest admirers of our Liturgy. Too many of those who have been familiar with it from their childhood are apt to overlook its excellencies, and to be occupied in spying out defects.

we find that cavils innumerable have been raised against the Holy Scriptures themselves.

(4.) And lastly, we should recollect how much easier it is to find particular faults—if any one is so disposed—in a *fixed form* of Prayer,—a written Code of Regulations [Canons, or Rubrics],—and in short with any thing distinctly laid down by some governing Body, than with what is said or done within some religious community that proceeds on a totally different plan;—which leaves almost everything to the discretion of such individual Minister. For, in this latter case, the blame of anything that is thought to be amiss, is laid on the *individual*, not on the *Church* of which he is a minister. But in the other case, for every fault or imperfection—real or imaginary, that any one may find or fancy in our Liturgy or other Formularies, the *Church itself* is held responsible. If there is something injudicious or unscriptural in the extemporary Prayers of this or that Dissenting Minister, *he* indeed is perhaps blamed for it, but not the religious community he belongs to, because *that* had given him no such directions, but had left him to act on his own judgment, and on his own responsibility. Another minister of the same Body, we will suppose, says something equally objectionable in some different way; and so do perhaps twenty more. Let the whole of what is said by each of these—or by any one of them—or even by one of the most unexceptionable—be taken down exactly, in writing, and printed and published, as a “Form of Common-Prayer,” and it would perhaps be found open to more censures than all our Church Services put together. But as it is, no censure is passed on the religious community, but only on the individual Ministers: and the members of that Community may perhaps go on criticising our Formularies, safe from all censure of *theirs*; since they have none. And many unthinking persons will perhaps overlook the *one* error chargeable on the Body—that of leaving too much to individual discretion.

When the famous “Long Parliament” suppressed, about two centuries ago, our Prayer-book, and substituted the book called the “Directory” for public Worship, they secured this against such objections as had been brought against our Forms of Prayers, by providing *none*; merely admonishing the Ministers

that their prayers should be simple, pious, scriptural, edifying, &c., an admonition which no one could find fault with. And if the prayers of any of their ministers were (as probably was often the case) extravagant, or silly, or dull, or even such as might, in one or two generations, have brought a congregation into the condition of some in Geneva, (which we remarked on in Caution No. XXIV., p. 432,) they might have said "Oh, this is no fault of ours, for we enjoined the direct contrary!"

The fault was, not in giving objectionable directions, but in giving none but what were too vague and indefinite to be of any use.

The like takes place in many other cases besides that of a Church. An Empire governed as the Turkish is, by an absolute Sultan, whose Will is Law, and whose Pashas, Cadis, and other Magistrates administer justice without any fixed rules, each according to his own fancy, is exempt from all the censures—fair or unfair—which may be passed on any parts of the British Constitution, because there is *no* Constitution. And the Turks may bring objections (some of them well-founded) against the laws and precedents of our Courts of Justice; without any possibility of our bringing like objections against any system of rules of theirs, since they dispense with all system. The *absence* of a system—the *want* of a Constitution—is the only thing we can object to. But an Englishman would generally prefer our Constitution and our Laws, with all their imperfections, to the unrestrained Will of individual Rulers.

How much ought, in each point, to be strictly laid down, and how much left to individual discretion, is a question to be decided, in each case, by the nature of that case. But it is important that you should be on your guard against allowing an unfair advantage to objectors;—to those who may go on continually pointing out faults, real or fancied, in any distinctly prescribed Forms, Rules, and Systems, and selecting their own points of attack, while secured from any *similar* objections being brought against themselves.

We are far from maintaining, however, that there is nothing in the Formularies, or in any part of the System of our Church, that is capable of improvement. For—

- (1.) Some things which were appointed by our Reformers.

(since they were but fallible men) may possibly have not been the very wisest and best, even at the time.* And

(2.) There are some things which they themselves did not consider as the best-adapted to all *future* times; which they regarded as only of a temporary character;† and which they would themselves, perhaps, were they now living, be the foremost to alter, in conformity to altered circumstances.‡ The sentiments probably of all who were concerned in drawing up our Formularies, were what we find expressed in the Preface to the Prayer-book by the framers of the latest additions to it: "It hath been the wisdom of the Church of England, ever since the first compiling of her publick Liturgy, to keep the mean between the two extremes, of too much stiffness in refusing, and of too much easiness in admitting any variation from it."

On the whole, taking into account all that has been now laid before you, any fair-minded and soberly-pious man will see much more cause to be thankful to God's Providence for such Formularies, Ordinances, and Institutions as we do possess, than to grieve and complain that they fall short of perfection.

But such a man, though he will deprecate any rash and violent changes, and though he will easily perceive that Parliament—which alone has the power to introduce any change at all—is as unlikely, as it is unfit, to undertake any such task—such a man, we say, may still, without inconsistency, wish that such a power should be entrusted to some persons specially selected for the purpose.

Whether these were appointed as a permanent, or merely a temporary Body, and whether called a Commission, Council,

* For instance, it was perhaps too great a concession to the then-prevailing reverence for the Apocryphal books, to appoint Lessons out of them to be read in Church, (not however on any *Sunday*.) when there are above a hundred chapters of the Bible not read at all. And the selection of the portions of Scripture to be read, might perhaps be improved. Again, there seems to have been a mistake as to the design and character of the Apostles' Creed. The child who is catechised is indeed taught that God the Son is our Redeemer; but he learns this from the *Catechism itself*, not from "these articles of his Belief."—(See p. 436, of this No.)

† The Homilies they expressly speak of, as containing doctrine necessary "for these times;"—namely, for the times when they were drawn up. The Address, again, at the opening of the Confirmation-Service, was very needful at the beginning of the Reformation, when most of the congregation had been brought up under the system of bringing children to be confirmed at seven years old. But in these days, it would be more suitable to print it as a *Rubric*, than as an Address to the People.

‡ Those who allow, said the famous Lord Bacon, that the laws of a *State* require altering from time to time, but would have everything relating to a *Church* unalterably fixed for ever, might as well maintain that though houses and castles require to be kept in repair, Chapels and Churches will last for ever without any repair at all.

Synod, Assembly, or by whatever other name, they ought clearly to be all of them Members—though not necessarily clergymen—of the Church whose affairs were to come before them.*

And if such a Body of men should resolve, on mature deliberation, (as we have no doubt they would,) to recommend much less change than some persons may desire, and to leave the far greater part of our Institutions nearly unaltered, this result would be far from having no effect even in reference to what would be left unchanged. All reasonable men would be the more disposed to be satisfied when they found that the reason why, in such and such points, no alteration was made, was not that there was nowhere any *power* to make it, but that it had been deliberately decided to be *unadvisable*. For, the proper business of a Legislature, is not so much to *enact laws*, and introduce changes, as to *decide* whether any, and what, laws and changes are or are not *needed*.

To advocate, then, and to endeavour to bring about, such a measure as we have alluded to, does not imply any hostile or contemptuous feeling towards our Church. But those who are of a contrary opinion—who despair of any such measure being adopted, or who dread it as an evil, and endeavour to *prevent* its being adopted,—these are doubly bound to make the best of things as they are,—to abstain from all complaints, well or ill-founded,—and to set an example of cheerful conformity to whatever is established. For when a man is convinced that some inconveniences or disadvantages of which he is sensible, admit of no remedy, or of none but what he regards as a worse evil, he ought to submit, and exhort others to submit, in patient silence; just as he would to an unfavourable Season, or an incurable Disease, or any other uncontrollable dispensation of Providence.

And all should make up their minds—at least while things

* "As for a revival of Convocation, I, for one, do not desire it. That Body was never suited to the character and requirements of our Church. It is less suitable now than ever. It represents only the Church's Clergy. It may be doubted, too, whether so large a deliberative Assembly as would adequately represent the Church, or even the Church's Clergy, is the most appropriate for the discussion of some of the sacred topics which would, from time to time, claim the attention of an Ecclesiastical Legislature. But, is it, therefore, impossible, that by any adaptation to existing circumstances, some form of Church Legislature should be devised, free at least from objections stronger than those which lie against our having none at all?"—*Charge of the Bishop of Norwich, 1852.*

do remain in their actual state—to make the best of them, and to support, and avail themselves of, in the best way they can, the existing regulations and organization of our Church. For, any disregard of these,—any departure from what is established—any irregularity—any manifestation of a disposition to disparage the Church, and its enactments, and its governors,—has a tendency (besides other ill consequences) to produce a dangerous *re-action* towards an opposite extreme.

And this is the point which we have chiefly had in view, in the present, and some preceding Numbers. Some causes there must have been (as we observed in Caution XVIII.), that led to the sudden outbreak, *at this particular time*, of those doctrines and practices of the Tract-party which we have been protesting against. And *one* of these causes was, we are convinced, a reaction against an apparent disregard, among many members of our own Communion, of a *Church*, and of everything pertaining to a Church. Indeed this is confirmed by the very language adopted by the Tract-party; who use the terms “Church-principles,” and “Anglican-principles,” as descriptive of their system;—principles by which they are endeavouring (as some of them have confessed) to “unprotestantize” our Church.

Other causes there are, that have contributed, by causing a re-action, to favour the growth of that Party. And some observations on these we propose to offer in a future Number.

February, 1853.

No. XXVI.

"I dread not so much the war without, as the contest within. A root when well fixed in the earth will not be harmed by the winds; but if it be made unstable itself by a worm gnawing it from within, it will fall, even though nothing assault it."—*Chrysostom, Hom. in 2 Cor. xvii.*

A COUNTRY blacksmith, when you send your horse to be shod, will sometimes lame the poor animal, by cutting the foot to fit an ill-made shoe, instead of making a shoe to fit the foot.

Now, somewhat similar to this, is the process by which the Articles and other Formularies of our Church are crippled by unfair expounders of them. Such persons, when they find the plain meaning of the Formulary inconsistent with their own sentiments, begin to pare and cut away and distort whatever they dislike, until the hoof, indeed, is forced into the shoe, but in so maimed a condition, that it would have been better if it had never been shod. And certainly it would be far better to have *no Tests* at all, than that they should be thus unfairly used. For if our formularies are to be *made* to bear any "non-natural" sense we may chuse to force upon them, it is plain that they are no longer of any use as a Test of doctrine; while the strained interpretations by which they are reconciled to everything we please, serve only to degrade us before others, and even in our own eyes.

Now, to have absolutely no test or terms of Communion at all, would be to renounce entirely the character of a Christian Church; since, of such a Body, it is plain that a Jew, a Polytheist, or an Atheist, might, quite as consistently as a christian, be a member, or even a governor. And to have (as some have wildly proposed) no test but the very words of Scripture, would be scarcely less extravagant; since there is no one professing christianity who does not maintain that his sentiments are in accordance with the true meaning of Scripture, however absurd or pernicious those sentiments may really be. For it is notorious that Scripture itself is at least as liable as human Formu-

laries (and indeed, more so), to have forced interpretations put on its language.

Accordingly, there is no christian Community which does not, in some way or other, apply some other test besides the very words of Scripture. Some Churches, indeed, do not reduce any such Tests to writing, or express it in any *fixed* form, so as to enable every one to know beforehand precisely how much he will be required to bind himself to. But nevertheless, those churches do apply a test, and very often a much more stringent, elaborate and minute test, than our Liturgy and Articles. In such Communities, the candidate-pastor of a Congregation is not, to be sure, called on to subscribe in writing a definite Confession of Faith, drawn up by learned and pious persons after mature deliberation, and publicly set forth by common authority. But he is called upon to converse with the leading members of the Congregation, and satisfy them as to the soundness of his views; not, of course, by merely repeating texts of Scripture,—which a man of any views might do, and do honestly;—but by explaining *the sense* in which he understands the Scriptures. Thus, instead of subscribing the Thirty-nine Articles, he subscribes the sentiments of the leading members—for the time being—of that particular congregation over which He is to be placed as Teacher.

And thus it is that Tests of some kind or other, written or unwritten [*i. e.*, transmitted by oral tradition], fixed for the whole Body, or variable, according to the discretion of particular Governors, are, and must be, used in every christian Church. Now the legitimate object of such Formularies is equally defeated, by making them Standards for the Interpretation of Scripture, or by making what we take to be the sense of Scripture, the Standard for interpreting *them*.

For, the object of the Church in imposing these Formularies, is to ascertain whether the result of our inquiries into the sense of Scripture has been the same as hers: and this object is equally defeated by our forcing the Church's words to square with our notion of the sense of Scripture, or by forcing our notion of the sense of Scripture into accordance with the declarations of the Church.

We have already noticed, in a former Caution, the manner in which some of the Tract-party have endeavoured to evade the

plain meaning of our Formularies ; but it would not be fair to disguise the fact, that principles of interpretation quite as daring as theirs, have been held by their most vehement opposers ; and that examples of strained explanation have been given, in quarters far removed from Tractism, which might almost keep in countenance those of the famous No. XC.

A writer, for instance, who describes himself as "having nailed his colours to the mast* of the Evangelical Party," having set forth certain views of Baptismal Regeneration, which he regards as unauthorized by Scripture, proceeds to remark that, this being so, "We necessarily conclude *A PRIORI*, that they form no part of the Creed of the Church of England." . . . "Against this, however," he goes on to say, "it will be objected, that the Formularies of the Church do nevertheless contain some expressions, which seem to countenance those doctrines, and, therefore, that either the doctrine so favoured is scriptural, or that the Formulary which implies it is not scriptural. The question then is,—upon the assumption that the said doctrine is not Scriptural, whether our Church be *inconsistent* with its own rule of Faith? To which the answer is here given in the *Negative*. And the Reason is this : That Rule of Faith which excludes from our Creed all that is not Scriptural, excludes also from our Formularies every *Acceptation* which is not Scriptural. And consequently, every Minister of the Church of England is inevitably bound, both by his Subscription and by his ordination Vow, to put such a construction upon the words of our Church Services as shall be in agreement with its Rule of Faith.

It is curious to observe that this is, almost word for word, the plea upon which the Arians of the last century endeavoured to justify themselves in subscribing the Formularies of our Church. Those Formularies, they admitted, contained some expressions which seemed to countenance (what they called) the vulgar notions about the Trinity ; but then "the Protestant churches require men to comply with their forms merely on account of

* Is not this plainly declaring his determination not to yield to any amount of Argument? For, when a Commander literally nails his colours to the mast, that action is understood as announcing that he will not surrender to any force. To "nail one's colours to the mast," in *controversy*, therefore, in which the weapons of warfare are not cannon balls, but reasons, should, in strictness, mean, to announce a determination not to be convinced by any arguments ; or, at least, not to own that we are convinced.

their being agreeable to Scripture, and consequently in such sense only wherein they are agreeable to Scripture ;”* and as it seemed evident to them that the Athanasian doctrine was quite repugnant to Scripture, they “necessarily concluded *à priori*” that it was not, to them, the just meaning of our Formularies.

And it is, perhaps, even still more curious to observe, that substantially the same plea is urged, upon other occasions, by the very persons who are most opposed to the writer whom we have quoted, and to the party to whose mast† he has nailed his colours. The Articles of the Established Church, say the Tractites, though perhaps “ambitious of a Protestant sense,” are “patient of a Catholic one.” And as our Church certainly claims to be “in accordance with Catholic antiquity,” we are bound to understand her declarations in no other sense than such as seems to us in harmony with the decisions of the Antient Fathers.

But in all such reasonings, men confound the rule for *receiving* human forms, with the rule for *interpreting* them. Church Formularies, we should *interpret*, as we would any other documents, by the natural force of the words, and the known scope and design of the compilers or imposers. And when we have thus found their *meaning*, we must *try* that meaning by whatever we regard as the ultimate test of Doctrinal Truth ; to *receive* or *reject* them, according as they agree or disagree with that.

It is worth observing, with reference to this curious resemblance between the Tractites and their opponents, that it is an instance of one effect of *Reactions* which is commonly overlooked. It shows that men are sometimes driven *round* by Reaction into that very error (only in a slightly different shape) from which they fancy themselves to be flying.

Thus, the loose way in which some of the so called “Evangelical” party were accustomed to deal with the Formularies of our Church—making the plain meaning of those documents bend to what the subscribers might consider the true sense of Scripture—gave general scandal and alarm to many who felt the importance of a settled order, and saw the manifest danger of its subversion. Hence arose a cry, in the way of reaction,

* Clarke’s Introduction to “The Scripture-doctrine of the Trinity.”

† Such, as we have seen, is this writer’s own expression. But he probably means that he has nailed the colours of the Evangelical party to HIS Mast.

for a strict adherence not only to the spirit, but even in all cases to the very letter, of the Liturgy and Articles—and especially of the Liturgy, because that had been most hardly treated by those whose conduct called forth the cry. But too soon the attempt to restore constitutional order took the shape of a crusade against liberty. The Liturgy and Articles, however strictly interpreted or rigidly enforced, left many points of doctrine undefined, and many matters of practice to be determined by individual discretion. There was still, therefore, much room left in the Church for diversity of opinion and variety of practice. Great blanks in the Church-system had been, as it were, left by our Reformers—often advisedly, sometimes through oversight, and not unfrequently from finding it impossible to agree upon the *way* of doing that which all were anxious to have done. Of these blanks, however, the more ardent maintainers of Regularity soon became impatient; and looking about them for some more stringent rule than was ready at hand, bethought themselves, naturally enough, of the decisions of the CATHOLIC CHURCH. But no sooner was that venerable Form evoked out of the mists of Antiquity, than it was found, like an over-powerful ally, too strong for the very cause in the name of which it was summoned. The “Catholic Church” had so much more to say and show, than the Church of England, that the latter soon shrank into comparative insignificance, and came to be considered as a mere appendage to the other, having no proper will, or at least authority of its own. And soon the maintainers of Church-principles began to deal with the Liturgy and Articles in a manner which far exceeded the greatest insults that had ever been offered to those Formularies by the party against whom they had excited such a clamour.

We may, perhaps, see an instance of the same sort of reaction in the way in which many minds have been led to tolerate the Tractite-practice of Reserve in preaching the Doctrine of the Atonement. They were first disgusted by a style of preaching which, in fact, *reserved* the whole Body of christian morals, and put forward nothing but the Doctrine of Justification *by* Faith only,*

* Here it may be worth remarking, by the way, that in our translation of the Scriptures, and also in the eleventh article, it would have been more correct, and more conformable to the original expressions of the Sacred Writers, instead of the words “*by* faith,” to say “*through* faith.” Strictly speaking, a man is not justified, nor can obtain Salvation, either *by* faith, or *by* works. Faith is required of him, and so are

as the sum and substance of the Gospel. They were indignant at such a mutilation of christian truth; they were alarmed at the mischievous effects which in some instances they had observed it to produce. They were eager, and rightly eager, for a more practical style of preaching; and thus they were led on gradually to confound the evil consequences of preaching the Atonement exclusively and injudiciously, with the idea of preaching it openly at all; till, in the end, they substituted one system of reserve for another.

Indeed, the more one considers how shocking in itself was the scheme propounded in the famous Tracts upon Reserve, the more he will be convinced that there must have been something in the circumstances of the times at that particular period, to prepare men's minds for it, and to throw upon it from without a specious colour of plausibility which it certainly had not from within. And though nothing can be more absurd than the pompous claims which some Tractite writers make to the honour of having *rediscovered* the necessity of cultivating good works—nothing more outrageous than the extravagant bitterness with which they denounce what they style “the Lutheran doctrine of Justification,” as the prolific source of every heresy, and every abomination,—yet none, who were not mere maniacs, would have ventured upon such claims, or such denunciations, if there had not been *something* to give them an air of plausibility. Now, *that something* appears to have been the circumstance that, in too many cases, the duty of sedulously cultivating active righteousness had been a topic not insisted upon often enough, or prominently enough, or largely enough, by preachers of that school which was then most popular in these countries.

Of some, indeed, it would be too gentle a form of expression to say, that they did not press strongly enough the duty of active righteousness, and the motives to its cultivation; because their theological system left, in fact, no intelligible grounds for establishing any such duty at all, and no motives to be urged

good works; but if either or both of these could be the efficient cause of justification before God, and of final Salvation, he would be justified and saved by *himself*, since the faith and the obedience that are required of any one, must be his *own* faith and obedience. But it is by God's free mercy in Christ, and by that only, that we can be saved. Faith is only (as some have rightly expressed it) the *hand* with which we lay hold of God's offers; and obedience is the necessary fruit of real christian faith. “By Grace,” says Paul (Eph. ii. 3), “are ye saved, *through* faith; and that, not of yourselves—it is the gift of God.” See “The Homily on the Salvation of Mankind,” expressly referred to in the Articles, on this subject.

for the discharge of it. Faith, they described as an individual's personal assurance of the divine acceptance of him ; and this acceptance they represented as so full and final, that all the believer's transgressions past, present, and future, were at once and for ever hidden from God's sight, and absolutely ceased to be sins at all in his view.* So that it was (according to them) a mere temptation of the Enemy which could lead us, from any feeling of remorse after a crime, to suspect that God took notice of it, or was displeased with us on that account ; and not satisfied with thus securing to the believer an immunity from guilt, they further taught that, from the moment of his justification, he was invested with all the merit of Christ's sinless obedience, and might, consequently, claim eternal life, in virtue of that transferred righteousness, as due to him from God the Father, in the way of debt.

Such was the system urged (just two years before the Tracts for the Times were first issued) from the Pulpit of St. Mary's, upon the University of Oxford, in a Sermon, (afterwards published,) which then and subsequently produced no slight commotion in men's minds.†

Now, it is plain that such a system as this leaves no intelligible motive to holiness—not regard to God's favour: for that (it seems) we possess, in virtue of our union with Christ, quite irrespective of our personal behaviour. God cannot (on this

* We have ourselves heard a preacher tell his hearers, that the Elect should grieve indeed for the sins of the world, but not for their own; since God suffers his People to fall into very grievous sins, expressly to keep them humble!

† "God sees no sin in believers, because there is none in believers before him; and though feeling, sense and reason, tell him that it is *not* so, yet the word of God tells him that it *is* so; and, indeed, reason itself must confess this, that if there were any sin in believers before the face of God, God must behold it; but if God does not behold it, then there is none. Now the word of God (Numb. xxiii. 21) plainly says, *God hath not beheld iniquity in his (justified) Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in his (believing) Israel.*" . . . "The believer, by God's imputation, is truly a fulfiller of the Law. And it is fulfilled, not actively by our legal workings, for no man hath ever so done, and so it is not said *by us*; but it is fulfilled evangelically and passively, but no less truly, and therefore it is said *in us*; wherefore also it is said by Paul, *He that loveth*, which love is that by which faith worketh, *hath fulfilled the law.*" . . . "And whereas the believer by faith hath made this righteousness his own, it is utterly impossible that he should want any other. . . . Therefore as many of us as trust in Christ, being thus clothed, are not only counted, but made, perfectly righteous and holy, without any spot or blemish of sin in the sight of God. And this is food for our faith to feed upon; for whereas by reason of sin remaining in us (for 'if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves'), the Devil tempts us to believe through the medium of our feeling, that God takes notice, and is angry with us, on account of sin: on the other hand, God comes in plainly and forcibly with his word of truth, and says not only *I have not beheld iniquity in Jacob*, but by one offer my Son *hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.*"

scheme) be displeased by our transgressions, since (according to it) He does not see them at all; nor can He be pleased with our services, since they, weak and imperfect as they are, would only mar the perfection of that imputed holiness, in which we are already invested in his sight, if they were unskilfully blended with it. Nor have we any *interest* (upon this scheme) in practising righteousness for ourselves, since heaven and all its joys are represented as infallibly ours already, purchased at so costly a price, that God could not justly deny us a place in those blissful mansions, whatever were our conduct.

With a happy inconsistency, however, even such Divines as we have been speaking of, contended that the Faith which they inculcated, would, in some unaccountable way or other, produce good works: and so it might seem as if there was one appropriate place left, even upon this scheme, for holiness—namely, as a test and evidence of the sincerity of our faith, and the reality of our acceptance. But even from this place it was carefully deposed, out of a shrinking apprehension of “self-righteousness;” and believers were warned against nothing more carefully than against trusting to any evidence but that of faith itself.

But so formal and deliberate an exclusion of personal holiness from any intelligible place in the christian scheme was comparatively rare. A more common fault was, that this topic was either lost sight of, or touched upon but slightly; and men were left practically under the impression that, when once they had believed in Christ’s atonement, there remained no more necessity for active exertion or careful vigilance, on their own part, but all the rest would follow of itself, and as a matter of course. Christians, in short, were led to feel as if what lay before them was not “a race” to be *run* by themselves, in the strength which God had given them—not a “striving for the mastery,” where a “good fight” was to be maintained by constant vigilance and courage—but rather as a voyage, in which all we had to do was to select a good ship and a skilful pilot, and having once for all embarked by faith, suffer ourselves to be *carried* to the haven where we would be.

Now the former of these views is unquestionably that in which a christian life is constantly represented in Scripture; and no teacher who does not faithfully and frequently bring

before his hearers that view of the matter, is really declaring unto them "all the counsel of God."

"To imitate St. Paul," says the present Archbishop of Canterbury, "is to preach Christ at once to be relied on as a Saviour, and to be obeyed as a King, and, together with the texts which declare justification to be a free gift, to lead the hearers to their consequent obligation by the context. Where this is neglected, the corrupt heart finds a thousand ways of deceiving itself into false security. It is not necessary that a Preacher should in terms deny that holiness is required of a believer: the very contrary is often implied, or supposed to be implied, in the sermons even that mislead: but when Christ's indefinite and unconditional mercy is the only prominent feature of a discourse, and all the duties of a believer are kept in the shade, a false impression may be often given where the intention to give it would be sincerely disclaimed. The great desideratum in christian teaching is an association between justification and holiness of life, as cause and effect; an association which should arise regularly and spontaneously in the mind, according to the connexion which the Apostle has traced, 'Christ died for us, that we might live to Him.' "*"

Direct Antinomian doctrine, indeed,—the open rejection of moral virtue altogether as having nothing to do with Christianity,—is far from being either commonly taught, or generally acceptable: and, considering the sinfulness of the human heart, it is very remarkable that this should be the case. Certain it is, however, that the generality of men are shocked and disgusted at being plainly taught that no sin a man commits, can at all endanger his salvation; and that the practice of any virtue does not render him at all the more acceptable to God. There are, it seems, certain notions of right and wrong implanted by the Creator in the human mind; (alluded to by Paul, in Ep. to Rom. ii. 14, and elsewhere) which are such, till depraved by a long course of wickedness, that, though insufficient to produce great exertion in the performance of duty, or to resist temptation to do wrong, they yet, in the absence of temptation, disincite men to regard moral good and evil with total indifference, or to conceive that God can do so. Moreover, there is no one, probably, however lax in his morals, who

* Apostolical Preaching, pp. 238, 239.

does not believe himself to possess at least *some* good quality which many persons want: or who lives, and believes himself to live, in the commission of *every* sin. Even a man of immoral character, accordingly, is, in general, not well pleased to be taught that any instance of his good conduct, (or which he thinks to be such) gives him no advantage over one whose conduct, in the same point has been bad; or that his having abstained from any crime, does not at all raise him (except as far as worldly success may be concerned) above the level of one who has committed that crime. Men even of a very low tone of morality usually retain, and wish to retain such a portion of approbation of what is good, and disapprobation of evil, as to think the better of themselves for anything that is good in them, and the worse of their neighbour for any vice of his, from which they are themselves exempt.

Be the cause, however, what it may, the fact is certain, that plain, open, thorough-going, Antinomian doctrine is not generally popular, even with men of depraved character.

Much greater is the danger (as we have already remarked) of men's falling *practically* into a careless inattention to their moral conduct, than of their theoretically maintaining that moral conduct is a matter of indifference. Error is ever the more dangerous, the more it is mixed up with truth. Now, it is most true, and a truth of great importance, that "good works"—*external actions* of any kind—so far from having any claim to be considered as meritorious, are not, properly, to be regarded as even intrinsically virtuous. Even the heathen moralists distinctly taught that it is the *disposition* of the agent that alone can, in strict language, be called virtuous or vicious; the same act sometimes being either morally good, or bad, or indifferent, according to the *motive*. And it is true also that even the best moral *dispositions and habits* can claim no reward as a matter of right, at the hands of Him "from whom cometh every good and perfect gift"—of Him "from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works, do proceed." The branch cannot boast itself independent of the vine which affords it all its nourishment—even Christ; on whose body we are engrafted, through faith, and by whom we are enabled to bring forth fruit. (John xv. 5.)

But if any one, while he dwells continually, and very strongly, (as we certainly ought to do,) on justification through faith, and

on the total impossibility of our being able to merit and earn, either wholly or in part, eternal happiness by any good works of our own, even could we lead a life of sinless virtue, and on the consequent necessity of renouncing all claims founded on our own righteousness, and of prostrating ourselves in all humility of soul before the cross of Christ;—if, we say, while the Christian pastor is earnestly occupied with these doctrines, and is labouring daily to impress on himself and his hearers the impossibility of our doing anything that can purchase salvation, he is content at the same time, with a slight occasional hint that this doctrine is *not irreconcilable* with the moral precepts of Christ and his apostles,—if he is satisfied with just inserting an incidental salvo, by saying, in substance, that notwithstanding the utter worthlessness of our good works, nevertheless, it is to be expected that a sincere Christian will lead a moral life;—if, we say, this disproportionate inattention be shown, with respect to the practical “fruits of the Spirit,” a very great danger will result, of men’s substituting a mere approbation of christian virtue in the abstract, for the practical exemplification of it in their lives;—a danger that, while they admit, in theory, the obligations of virtue, they will not comply, practically, with the apostle’s direction to “be *careful* to maintain good works.” (Tit. iii. 8.)

It was evidently his design, as well as his blessed Master’s, that Christians should *exert* themselves to “walk worthy of their vocation;”—should “give *diligence*,” (as Peter exhorts them) “to make their calling and election sure;”—should “*watch*, that they enter not into temptation;”—should “*run*, that they may obtain;”—should “*strive* to enter in at the strait gate;”—should “*work* out their salvation, with fear and trembling;”—and “casting aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, should run with *patience* the race set before them.” The apostles expected, not that the Christian should be a *good* man *notwithstanding* his being justified through faith, but that he should be the *better* man in *consequence* of his faith; not only acting on better motives than those who were not Christians, but also acting better,—“glorifying his heavenly Father by bringing forth much fruit,” and by letting his “light so shine before men, that all might see his good works,” and thence be led to glorify Him also.

But a different kind of teaching from this is often found to

be popular; though plain Antinomian teaching is not. There are many who, like Felix, will be ready to "hear you concerning the faith in Christ," but "when you reason of righteousness, and temperance, and the Judgment to come," will be alarmed and uneasy, and be disposed to bid you "go your way for this time!" Anything that leads, or that leaves men,—without distinctly rejecting christian virtue,—to feel little anxiety and take little pains about it;—anything which, though perhaps not so meant, is liable to be so understood, by those who have the wish, as to leave them without any feeling of real shame, or mortification, or alarm, on account of their own faults and moral deficiencies, so as to make them anxiously watchful *only* against seeking salvation *by* good works, and not at all, against seeking salvation *without* good works—all this is likely to be much more acceptable to the corrupt disposition of "the natural man," than such teaching as that of our Lord and his apostles.

But those apostles would have counted it treason to their Master, in themselves, or in any ministers of the Gospel, to be "men-pleasers," seeking what may be most acceptable to the hearers, rather than most profitable; or shrinking, through fear of unpopularity, from "setting before them *all* the counsel of God." And it would be very rash for us pastors of the present day, to imagine that we can with safety pass lightly over the points which the apostles found it necessary to dwell on with such continual watchfulness and frequent and earnest repetition. For, the liability of the human heart to self-deceit in what relates to moral duty, was not peculiar to their times. And we are bound not merely to *reconcile* together the several parts of their teaching, but to show the close *connexion* of those different parts, where the Writers themselves evidently perceived such connexion. If we were to explain that a life abounding in good works is not inconsistent with faith in Christ, we should be far from coming up to their meaning; which is, that the one springs naturally and necessarily from the other, and that both, and each, must be sedulously attended to;—that "the branch," (to use our Lord's illustration) "can bear no fruit except it abide in the vine;" and again, that any "branch of the vine which does *not* bear fruit, will be cut off and cast away to wither."

But upon this, and some other matters relating to the same general subject, we shall have more to say in the next Caution.

March, 1853:

No. XXVII.

IT is not to be doubted that much of the extravagant and practically Antinomian teaching, to which we called your attention in the last Caution, had its origin in what many would call a pious dread of "self-righteousness."

It is a thing at once so desirable, and so difficult, to inspire men with anything like a due sense of human weakness and depravity, that, in seeking to accomplish this laudable object, some Divines are apt to think that no language is too strong to be employed; and it has even by some been erected into a Rule for deciding between different views of any doctrine, always to chuse that which "tends most (*i.e.*, seems to *us* to tend most) to depress the Creature, and exalt the Creator."

Now, such a Rule as this seems to us most rash and dangerous, and one which is, in many cases, more likely to lead to error than to truth. It is beginning at the wrong end.

We may, indeed, be very sure in general that true doctrines will tend far more than false ones, to promote the honour of God; *i. e.*, they will tend to promote that which God Himself regards as his honour. But the whole constitution and course of Nature will teach us, if we study it carefully and wisely, what inadequate judges we are in questions of that kind, and how little we can determine beforehand what is really the most for God's honour. The teacher of christian humility is surely setting but a bad example to his disciples if he thus begins by claiming for poor erring Man, whom he is to bring to a due sense of his insignificancy, the privilege of pronouncing upon a question which an Archangel might tremble to approach.

But in dealing thus with doctrines, we not only show ourselves backward scholars in the school of Nature, but equally betray an ignorance or disregard of the plain injunctions of Revelation. The teachers of Christianity were never constituted by Him from whom alone they derive their commission, judges of the expediency or in expediency of doctrine. An inflexible

rule has been laid down for them in the inspired Volume ; and their duty is " not to go beyond the Word of the Lord, to say less or more." It is by delivering whatever is plainly there written, to all, " whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear"—by " not shunning to declare all the counsel of God"—that they will (whatever be the other effects of their teaching) at least " keep *themselves* pure from the blood of all men." But if, on the contrary, they venture to trust to the exercise of their own discretion, they cannot reasonably hope to escape blame, if, through their mismanagement, the lame are turned out of the way, the weak offended, or the gainsayer hardened in his obstinacy.

But, indeed, the great danger, as well as the presumptuousness of such conduct as we have been censuring, may be seen in its practical effects. Too many, in their eager zeal to " depress the Creature, and exalt the Creator," have put forward statements which must, in the end, with every reflecting mind, defeat their own object.

If, for example, as some have maintained, the natural corruption of Man be such that he is of himself wholly incapable of distinguishing between right and wrong, it is hard to see how he can, in such a state, be properly called *wicked* at all. Such a Being may be disgusting or mischievous, or anything else of that sort you please ; but not *guilty*—not *sinful*—not *evil* in the moral meaning of the word. The brute animals frequently do things which, if done by a human Being, we should censure, as outrageous crimes, and visit with the severest punishments ; but, however we may feel disgusted and annoyed at what they do, no rational person feels, in their case, the sentiment of *moral indignation*.

Now, the difference in our behaviour in these respects, towards the brutes, and towards our fellow-men, seems expressly grounded upon the assumption, that Men have, and Brutes have not, a knowledge in such cases of the distinction between right and wrong. And as no one imputes *folly* to a brute, inasmuch as it is not a *rational* Being, so neither do we tax brutes with *sin* ; precisely because they have no *moral sense*.

Here, therefore, it would appear that religionists, in their zeal to make man *vile*, have unwarily represented him as *irresponsible* ; depressing his condition so low as to strip him not

only of *virtue*, but of *vice*. Not so the great Apostle of the Gentiles. It is not thus that Paul argues when he seeks to "conclude both the Jew and Greek under sin," and bring in "the whole world guilty before God." On the contrary, it is to the sentence of Man's own bosom—the judgment of Man's own conscience—the "work of the Law written upon Man's heart," that he appeals; and when he would shake the breast of his profligate Judge with alarm at the prospect of "judgment to come," he prepared for it by reasoning first of "righteousness and temperance." [Acts xxiv. 25.]

Indeed, it is to be feared that, upon the whole subject of christian *humility*, very great mistakes prevail, and that many who suppose themselves to be practising and teaching it, are, to a great extent, labouring under an utter misconception of its nature. Let us, then, take the present opportunity of giving you some seasonable cautions upon this most important subject.

Under this head, men should be cautioned—(1st), against the mistake of supposing that they have only to confess their own natural helplessness, and acknowledge that whatever there is that is good in them is the bountiful gift of God; and that so long as they have this before their minds, they are practising christian humility, and are safe from spiritual pride. Now this pious gratitude and reliance on God is indeed a necessary *part* of Christian humility; but it is *only* a part, and very far indeed from being the whole. It puts an end to *one* kind of self-sufficiency, by acknowledging that "our sufficiency is of God;" but it is far from being inconsistent with spiritual pride, undue contempt of others, and a disposition rashly to "count ourselves to have apprehended;" instead of "forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before, and pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God, in Christ Jesus," by "working out our salvation with fear and trembling."

A Christian instructor should point out accordingly to his hearers, that in our Lord's parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, the Pharisee is described as full of pious gratitude for his own supposed superiority: "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are; extortioners, unjust, adulterers," &c. And yet this man, though so distinctly referring everything to the divine power, is represented by our Lord as "*exalting himself*."

Do we not indeed see every day how prone men are to be proud of *royal* favour?—of having received from their sovereign, out of his kind regard for them, such distinctions as title, rank, power, fortune? How absurd then must it be for any one to suppose that there is no danger of being proud of *divine* favour,—that he is quite safe from pride, when he is perhaps convinced that he is distinguished as a favourite by the King of kings, and exalted far above the great Body of his fellow-Christians, and so peculiarly enlightened by that Spirit of truth as to be exempt from all danger of error, and all need of self-distrust! Self-distrust, indeed, such a person will regard, in his own case, as a *sin*; for he will consider any doubts concerning the perfect rectitude of anything that occurs to his own mind, as no less than distrust of God; after it has once been laid down and assumed as a principle, that all these impressions in his mind are undoubted suggestions of God's Holy Spirit. He may pray perhaps fervently on each occasion, for spiritual guidance: but if he neglect our Lord's admonition, "*Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation,*"—he inevitably *will* be led into temptation; by praying without watching, he will be in fact praying that he may *find himself in the right*; and by steadily rejecting every emotion of self-distrust, as the suggestion of the Evil-one prompting him to distrust God, doubtless he will end by being fully convinced that he *is* in the right. Thus effectually does Satan "*transform himself into an angel of light,*" by representing not only his own suggestions as coming from heaven, but every better suggestion as coming from himself;—by leading us not merely not to *seek rightly* for true christian humility, but to *shun* it as a sin.

(2) Secondly, Men should be warned not to suppose christian humility to consist in a mere *general* confession of the weakness and sinfulness of human nature, or (which comes to the same) such a sinfulness in themselves—or, if you will, such an utter corruption and total depravity in their own nature,—as they believe to be common to *every* descendant of Adam, including the most eminent apostles, and other saints.

We are not saying, you will observe, that the sinful disposition of the natural-man is to be denied, or explained away, or lost sight of; only, that the fullest and most habitual consciousness of *this*, does not constitute the whole, or the chief, and most difficult part of christian humility. A man may indeed feel

shame, mortification, self-abasement, alarm,—at being in any respect worse than might have been reasonably *expected of him*;—at having failed in some duty, or fallen into some sin, where others in like circumstances have behaved, or probably would have behaved, better. But who can really feel ashamed,—grieved,—humbled,—or alarmed,—at believing himself no better than the very best of men;—a sinner as vile as the apostles and martyrs, who told us to be “followers of them, even as they were of Christ Jesus?”* It is very true that they were by nature sinful men, and had to struggle, as we have, against the original frailty of Man’s heart, and to subdue it by the help of God’s Spirit. All we are saying is, that we must not allow the Christian to deceive himself into the thought that he really feels shame from a sense of any imperfection, great or small, which is *common* to the *whole human race*; or, that perfect christian humility consists in confessing one’s self to be no better than the very best and most eminent Christians.

It is very right that a child should be fully sensible of his not having the understanding and other powers of a man; but you will seldom find a child really mortified and *ashamed* at being no more than a child, and not possessing manly stature and understanding, if he is but equal or superior to his school-fellows of the same age. It is when he falls short of these, or has committed some fault which they have avoided, or which a child might have been fairly expected to avoid,—it is then, that he is likely to feel real shame; and what is more, a *profitable* shame, such as may incite him to endeavour to do better in future; whereas no one is incited to any exertion for the attainment of anything which he believes to be absolutely unattainable by himself and by his whole species. No man accordingly either *attempts* to add a cubit to his stature, and to still the waves of the sea by his command; or is *ashamed* at *not* having such power;—a power which, as he knows, belongs not to Man. His humiliation at a deficiency, and his exertions to overcome it, are alike limited to deficiencies which are *not* regarded as *unavoidable*.

We have dwelt at perhaps greater length than was necessary, on a point which appears to us to be of great moment. It is a truth which perhaps it is not very difficult,—but certainly very important,—to establish, that a man may be very deficient in

* 1 Cor. xi. 1.

personal christian humility, who confesses, however strongly, and reflects on, however earnestly, the universal depravity of human nature; speaking indeed in, apparently, the most disparaging terms, of himself; but in such terms as he holds to be equally applicable to the most eminent of the Apostles and Martyrs.

(3) And to this may be added, that there is not, necessarily, any humility evinced in the strong censures which some are accustomed to pass on the alleged presumption of such as hold the possibility of the Christian's attaining, through divine help, complete and sinless *perfection* in the performance of duty.

If indeed any one maintains that *he* himself *has* attained perfection, he is doubtless guilty of a high degree of presumption. And we do believe that no small danger of something approaching at least to such presumption, is incurred by some, from the view they take of the doctrine of the new-birth; and from their understanding the expression of the apostle John (1st Ep. iii. 6)—“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin,” as an *insulated* sentence, and without the explanation and qualifications which the very same Epistle furnishes: (as in ch. ii. and ch. v. ver. 16.) The apostle certainly means no less,—and we conceive he means no more,—than that all sin is a thing at *variance with the character* of a regenerate man; and that the antinomian doctrines of the Gnostics—whom he is especially writing against—are utterly unchristian.

But the danger we are now adverting to is this: there are some who seem to think that “the new-birth,” when once experienced, is a safe-guard in itself against ever again falling into any sin which shall exclude them from a state of grace,—or as, at any rate, making it quite certain that, whenever they fall, they shall rise again, sooner or later. And when such persons have once (as they imagine) *experienced* the change of the new-birth, they are apt to think that they need no other evidence of it in the consistent fruits of a steady perseverance in holiness. They are tempted to forget the admonition which bids “him that thinketh he standeth” to “take heed lest he fall;” and so they are led to relax their vigilance as if “the end of their faith” had been already gained, and nothing any longer depended on their own watchful care. Such accordingly seems to have been the conviction which, we are told, supported Oliver Cromwell on his death-bed, who on being strongly assured by his attendants of the indefectibility of divine grace, exclaimed,

"Then I am safe; for I am certain that I was once in a state of grace." Whatever sins he might have been subsequently permitted to fall into, could not, according to this view, endanger the loss of divine favour. And any one who has such a persuasion will no more think of vigilant precaution against sin, than a man would against one of those diseases that can only occur once, if he has already had it.

If, however, any one only maintains—without pronouncing anything respecting himself,—the possibility of attaining christian perfection, he is not on this account to be at once pronounced guilty of presumption; nor do those who differ from and censure him, necessarily surpass him in humility. He may reply, perhaps, to such a censure, by asking, *what* parts of our duty are *impossible* to be performed? how that can be called a *duty*, which is beyond the possibility of fulfilment? on *what days* we should omit, as vain and presumptuous, that prayer in the Te Deum in which we beseech the Lord to "keep us *this day* without sin?" and whether it be meant either that God has required of us something beyond what He enables us to perform, or that there is some christian virtue which He does *not* require of us?

We are not, it is to be observed, giving any opinion as to the tenet in question, further than to vindicate those who maintain it from being, necessarily, guilty of presumption; and to point out that the opposite opinion does not necessarily imply humility.

But there are some who really seem to think that it is a dangerous encouragement of Pride to hold out to any man strong hopes of becoming what they would consider *too* victorious in the struggle against sin. These persons contend as earnestly for the insurmountable power of inward depravity in this life, as if it were really needful for the honour of God that his Elect should not be made too good on this side of the grave; and vague notions of this sort are confirmed by the erroneous manner in which passages from Romans vii. are popularly alleged; as if the Apostle were there speaking of his own experience in his regenerate condition.

This is one of the many misconceptions which derive their chief plausibility from the present (in some cases unfortunate) division of the chapters.

Hardly any one, we think, reading the whole passage continuously, without any regard to the arbitrary break at the close of the 7th chapter, would be in danger of supposing that the

Apostle Paul, though speaking in the first person, is describing his own actual character, in his regenerate, sanctified state, when he describes a man "sold under sin,"—"brought into subjection to the law of sin,"—"doing the evil that he would not,"—"not doing the good that he would,"—and living a life of wretched contradiction to his own judgment. The contrast is so marked between this description, and that which immediately follows, of "those that are in Christ Jesus," (including, no one can doubt, the Apostle himself,) "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," who "being spiritually-minded have life and peace," "and through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh,"—the contrast, we say, is so marked between these two descriptions, that there would be little danger of any one's supposing they could be meant to apply to one and the same person at the same time. But the mistake, which is not unfrequently made, is the result, we conceive, of the reader's being accustomed to stop at the end of the 7th chapter, and then, a day after, or perhaps a week, or a month after, to begin the perusal of the 8th chapter, as if it were a distinct treatise.

The writings of the Apostle Paul do certainly contain many difficulties; but the easiest book in the world might be made unintelligible by being studied in that manner.

In the instance now before us, you may easily perceive that in the 5th and 6th verses of the 7th chapter, the Apostle is contrasting the conditions, of "those who are in the flesh," and "bring forth fruit unto death," and those who are in Christ, who "bring forth fruit unto God:" and that he proceeds to expand and develop that contrast more fully, in what follows. After having noticed (in the earlier part of the 7th chapter) the case of a Gentile destitute of revelation, he proceeds to describe, next, the person who is "under the law," with a knowledge and approbation of what is good, and an habitual practice of what is evil; and then, (from the beginning of ch. viii.) the person who is "in Christ Jesus," and "walks not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

And that the Apostle really is describing two different, and indeed opposite characters (which those only will doubt, who have been early accustomed to peruse chapters as so many distinct treatises,) you may easily convince yourself, beyond the possibility of doubt, by joining together portions of each descrip-

tion, and observing the monstrous and absurd incongruity that would result; which is a proof that they cannot be both applicable to the same person at the same time: as for instance,—

“There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, but *who do the evil they would not*, and do not the *good that they would*: . . . for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death; *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* . . . That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit; *for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not*. . . . So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God; but we are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit; *but I am carnal, sold under sin*.” &c., &c.

It is the more important to dwell earnestly upon the right interpretation of this passage, because the opposite interpretation goes to nullify practically all a teacher's best labours in the inculcation of moral duty. And those who suffer their hearers to retain false views of the meaning of this passage are, in fact, leaving them under the impression that all that is said about christian holiness, and the *care* and *pains* requisite for its attainment and preservation, however “good in theory,” is “impossible in practice.” For when any *description*, or *example*, is set before men, by way of pattern, we may be sure that this will be made the *standard*, and that general principles and precepts will be practically explained, and limited and modified in their application, according to that standard.

There *is*, no doubt, a danger of spiritual pride from the “*Doctrine of Perfection*,” as it is called; but it lies in a different quarter from what many of the opponents of that doctrine suppose. It is not, in any case, the belief that exemption from error is, either partially or completely, attainable, that leads to arrogance or presumptuous carelessness; but, the belief of the individual that *he has* attained it, or that one who shall have attained it, may *know* with certainty that he has done so.

If a man believes, for instance, that there may be some human actions so performed, under the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, as to be completely virtuous,—free from all admixture of sin,—in short, perfect,—this belief, whether agreeable or not to

the fact, can have no tendency to make him conceited or careless, provided he always maintains that no action, even though it should really be of this description, can be (by Man) known with infallible certainty to be such.

On the other hand, one who entertains the opposite opinion, may yet, conceivably, be deficient in humility and in watchfulness. For he may hold, that every, the best, human action, is, and ever must be, alloyed with some mixture of human infirmities; and yet he may, without inconsistency, believe that some part, or even the whole, of his own conduct, is, with all its imperfections, *as near* an approach to perfection as can possibly be expected of such a Being as Man. And whatever he may profess, even with the most sincere intention, he will not really be either mortified or alarmed at the thought of his not having attained a degree of perfection which he holds to be morally impossible.

Many persons persuade both others and themselves, that they are sufficiently cultivating Christian humility, by dwelling much on the weakness and depravity of human nature,—on the numerous temptations which beset us,—and on the errors and sins which *every man* must be expected to fall into. And if they are reminded that, according to the Scriptures, provision is made by divine grace, for purifying and strengthening our nature, and guarding us against temptation, they will often reply, Yes, but after all, every one does fall into many sins. Now, however true this may be, and to whatever extent, still the consideration of it does not necessarily produce vigilance and humility. The kind of self-abasement thus generated is the same we feel when acknowledging man's inability to "walk on the sea," or to "remove mountains," or to foretel future events. No one is much ashamed, or put on his guard, by a consciousness of being no better than what, he is persuaded, the wisest and best of his species *must* be.

However far, in point of fact, sinless perfection may be from being attainable, it is not our deficiency in anything that we regard as *unattainable*, but in what we regard as *attainable*, that tends to make us humble and diligent. The provisions of divine assistance which have been made, do, as we see but too plainly, in many instances fail, more or less, of their object, through man's negligence or perverseness: it may be true that they

never do, or will, completely succeed in attaining that object; but still, it is not so far forth as we feel assured they will *fail*, but so far forth as we believe that they *may succeed* in that object, that our zeal and watchfulness are excited.

The danger of *arrogance* then is incurred, not by any one's opinion, *generally*, on this point, (whether true or false,) but, by his confidence respecting *himself*:—his belief that he either *knows*, or may hereafter in this present life, know, that he *is* perfect. "If we *say that* we have no sin, we deceive ourselves," would be not the less true and important, even on the supposition that any one of us actually had completely subdued, by divine help, all sin: for he would not be enabled to know it, nor authorized to *say* it. "I know nothing (says Paul) by myself; (*i. e.*, against himself;*) yet am I not hereby justified, but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart; and then shall every man have [his] praise of God." If one man is confident that the moon is inhabited, and the other, that it is not, though one of these assertions must be in itself true, both of these men would alike "deceive themselves," by pronouncing with confidence, where they could have no certain knowledge.

If therefore any one should ask you, "do you think it possible for any man to attain sinless perfection?" your answer should be, "it is impossible to *find* such a man: for if there *be* such a one, neither we, nor he, could *know* it."

(4) Nor does the consideration that the human race are *fallen* from a state of innocency which our first parents possessed, make any difference as to the point now before us. A man may indeed feel shame and contrition on account of some deficiency which is *now* unavoidable, but which he *himself* had originally brought on, by his own misconduct. For instance, a poor day-labourer quite incapable of raising himself above that condition, may, if he had once been a man of good property, which he squandered away, be deeply ashamed of his present poverty, and full of remorse for his misconduct; but if he was *born* to poverty through the misconduct of some remote *ancestors* who had squandered away their estate, it will be at least a very different kind of shame that he

* Οὐδὲν ἑμαυτῷ σύννοια.

will feel ; he will feel ashamed, if at all, of his *ancestors* rather than *himself* ; and will feel perhaps a discontented mortification at his present lot, mingled with bitter indignation at *their* mis-conduct.

Such, we fear, is but too much like the kind of feeling with which the subtle Tempter of Man leads some Christians to contemplate their present condition as resulting from the fall of our first parents. He would fain persuade us that we ought to feel,—and that we do feel,—penitent for the sin of Adam ; and by this false and imaginary penitence, to lose sight of what we really may feel, and really ought to feel, for actual sins of our own.

Evils indeed, or *dangers*, may be felt, or may be apprehended, by us, as the consequence of another man's fault ; but no metaphysical subtilties can bring us really to feel,—though they may bring us to fancy we feel,—any of that real remorse and personal self-abasement, for *his* sin, which we should, and may, feel for an actual transgression of our own.

The true lesson of humility which the history of Adam's fall is designed to teach us, is, self-distrust and watchfulness, combined with a disposition anxiously to look for, and meekly to rely on the promised assistance of the " Spirit which helpeth our infirmities." The history teaches us that even if Adam and Eve had never been, themselves, exposed to such a trial as they did undergo, we, their descendants, resembling them, of course, in character, and where we differ, not differing (naturally) for the better, should, in like circumstances, have yielded, as they did, to the wiles of the same Tempter, whom our unaided powers are insufficient to resist.

It may be worth while here to observe incidentally, that some preachers in describing the condition of Man before the Fall, are accustomed, inadvertently, to use a kind of language likely to convey to the unreflective hearer a notion which we presume they cannot intend. They describe not only the *innocence*, but the purity and holiness, of Man's original character, in such terms as might be understood to imply that *frailty* was *introduced* at the Fall, and did not exist till after the eating of the forbidden fruit. Now it is true that there is no danger of any one's believing, in the strict sense of that word, a contradiction in terms : and a moment's reflection must make it clear to the capacity of a child, that Adam could not have transgressed if he had not been frail in a certain degree, however less that degree of frailty than ours.

But still, such language may produce confusion and perplexity in the minds of learners ; and may furnish adversaries with a plausible objection against our religion, as containing a self-contradiction. For that it *is* a self-contradiction to speak of the liability to yield to temptation having been originally produced by yielding to temptation—the cause by the effect,—no man in his senses can doubt. In whatever sense it is that man was said to be “created in God’s image,” and that all things that were made were pronounced “very good,”—whatever these expressions do mean, it is plain what they do *not* mean ; they cannot mean (as the narrative proves) that our first parents were of such a character as to withstand temptation to disobedience.

Innocent indeed, they undoubtedly were, till they had sinned ; for that is the very meaning of the word “innocent ;” but it is worth remarking that even innocence was lost before the forbidden fruit had been actually tasted ; for since we all know that sin consists, not in the outward bodily act, but in the intention of the *mind*, it is plain they had committed the sin as soon as the purpose of the act was fully formed.* A man is, morally, a murderer, at the moment he pulls the trigger of a gun with intent to assassinate ; and that, not the less, even should he chance to miss his aim.

(5) It may be added, lastly, that there is not necessarily any real humility in a disparagement of the human *understanding*—the intellectual powers, as contrasted with the affections and other feelings. “The pride of human reason” is a phrase very much in the mouth of some persons, who seem to think they are effectually humbling themselves by feeling (or sometimes by merely professing) an excessive distrust of all exercise of the *intellect*, while they resign themselves freely to the guidance of what they call the *heart* ; that is, their prejudices, passions, inclinations, and fancies. But the feelings are as much a *part of man’s constitution* as his reason. *Every* part of our nature will equally lead us wrong, if operating uncontrolled. If indeed a man employ his reason, not in ascertaining what God *has* revealed in Scripture, but in conjecturing what might be, or ought to be, the divine dispensations, he is employing his reason wrongly,

* This was known even to the heathen moralist by the light of nature:

“ Nam scelus intra se tacitum qui cogitat ullum
Facti crimen habet.”

and will err accordingly. But this is not the *only* source of error. He who, to avoid this, gives up the use of his reason, and believes or disbelieves, adopts or rejects, according to what suits his feelings, taste, will, and fancy, is no less an idolater of *himself* than the other; his feelings, &c. being a part of himself, no less than his reason. We may, if we please, call the one of these a "Rationalist," and the other an "Irrationalist;" but there is as much of the pride of self-idolatry in the one as in the other. The Greeks and Romans were indeed wretched idolaters, in their adoration of the beautiful statues of Jupiter and Minerva; but the Egyptians, who adored those of an ox and a hawk, were not the less idolaters. The Jews, relying on the decision of learned Rabbis, and the Pythagorean, who yielded implicit reverence to the dicta of the sage, did not more exalt Man into an oracle, in the place of God, than the Mussulmans, who pay a like reverence to idiots and madmen. Each part of our nature should be duly controlled; and kept within its own proper province: and the whole "brought into subjection to Christ," and dedicated to Him. But there is no real christian humility—though there be debasement—in renouncing the exercise of human reason, to follow the dictates of human feeling. The apostle's precept is, "in malice be ye children; but in understanding be ye men."

The error we have been adverting to is worthy of notice, only from the plausibility it derives from the authority of some persons who really do possess cultivated intellectual powers; and who therefore, when they declaim against the pride of human reason, are understood not to be disparaging an advantage of which they are destitute.* They appear voluntarily divesting themselves of what many would feel a pride in; and thus often conceal from others, as well as from themselves, the spiritual pride with which they not only venerate their own feelings and prejudices, but even load with anathemas all who presume to dissent from them. It is a prostration, not of man's *self* before God, but of one part

* It may be observed by the way, that the persons who use this kind of language (which is that of a large proportion of the Tract-party), never do, in fact, divest *themselves* of any human advantages they may chance to possess. Whatever learning or argumentative powers any of them possess (and some of them do possess much) we have always found them ready to put forth, in any controversy they may be engaged in, without showing much tenderness for an opponent who may be less gifted. It is only when learning and argument *make against* them, that they declaim against the pride of intellect; and deprecate an appeal to reason when its decision is unfavourable. So that the *sacrifice* which they appear to make, is one which in reality they do not make, but only *require* (when it suits their purpose) from others.

of himself before another. This kind of humiliation is like the idolatry of the Israelites in the wilderness: "The people *stripped themselves of their golden ornaments* that were upon them, and cast them into the fire; and there came out this calf."

It is important to observe that there is, under an outward and apparent difference, a close substantial resemblance between those who exalt the most highly the claims of Church-tradition, and some of their most vehement opponents. To decry private judgment and the pride of intellect, and appeal to the consent of the orthodox Fathers and the decisions of the Church, at the same time deciding *who* is orthodox, and what is the Church, according to our own judgment, and by the exercise of our own intellect; or, on the other hand, to decry Tradition, and appeal professedly to Scripture as the standard and rule of faith, but in reality making the standard our *own interpretation of Scripture*; these are in fact but two different forms of what may be called "self-idolatry." And there are persons who, unconsciously, fall into this latter error; who profess to appeal to Scripture as their rule of faith, and final decider of all controversies, but denounce (as the Gnostics of the earlier ages did) any one whose views differ from their own—though he may be, perhaps, a diligent and learned student of the Sacred Writings,—as "not *knowing* the Gospel,"—as blind—carnal—unconverted—"not understanding the things that be of God," &c.

"And where is the difference," it may be asked, "between taking for our rule of faith, the Scriptures, or our own interpretation of them? since the mere *words* of Scripture cannot be any guide unless we attach some *meaning* to them; and what meaning *can* we attach, except that which appears to us the true one?" Thus insidiously does self-estimation, and reverence for one's own party, creep in under the disguise of veneration for God's Word! we would answer, it is true that in taking Scripture for our *own* guide, we *must* be led by what appears—according to the best of our judgment—to be the sense of Scripture: but when making an *appeal* to Scripture in any discussion with *another*, we must refer him to the *words* of Scripture, and to the sense in which *he* can be brought to understand them. It is a very plain case for the application of that much-praised, though little-practised rule, of doing as we would be done by. Would you think it reasonable for another man to insist on your adopt-

ing *his* sense of Scripture, when it appeared to you not to be the true one, and denounce you, if you refused, as not knowing the Gospel? You can have no right then to deny him the same freedom of judgment which you claim for yourself.

Will you reply, "He is wrong, and therefore I ought not to adopt his views; but I am right, and therefore he ought to adopt mine?" Suppose this to *be*, in truth, the actual state of the case; are you *infallible*, that you can presume positively to pronounce this; and gifted with such miraculous *proofs* of infallibility as both authorize you to "judge another's servant," and bind him to acquiesce in your judgment?

Since our great Master, who not only knew the sense of Scripture, but also "knew what was in Man," pronounced no more against the Sadducees than, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures," it surely becomes a fallible mortal, to say only, "I think ye do err." But we certainly do often hear expressions which seem to imply (being intelligible on no other supposition) that those who use them make their appeal, not, really to *Scripture as it meets the eye of every* reader, but to their own interpretation of it. For instance, it has been said that, "in any difficulty, a far more safe and certain guide is provided for us, than all the wit or wisdom of man could furnish. The promise is, that '*the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein,*' and this promise is made doubly sure by the means provided for its accomplishment. '*Your heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.*' Here, then, is an interpreter incomparably beyond all that man could devise: a sure, an unerring guide: *One*; not a thousand conflicting authorities; and one too, obtained by 'asking.' " And again, that "what we call '*Scripture,*' is a collection of the writings of the Apostles, given by them authoritatively, as inspired by the Holy Ghost. If we believe their genuineness, and the truth of this pretension, we are then immediately in the Divine presence;—we are listening to God himself;—we are *perfectly free from all tincture or vicinity of error.*"

Now, does the Romish Church claim more than to be "perfectly free from all tincture of error?" And can any one who professes to be thus "perfectly free," deny that he claims infallibility? Admitting (as we do) that Scripture is a guide *in itself* infallible,—*i. e.* that we cannot be misled (as in the works



of fallible men) by errors of *the writer*, still, it can be an infallible guide to us, only so far as we understand its true sense; and in that, we know, all readers are not agreed. Admitting again that the Holy Spirit is an infallible interpreter of the Scriptures, still we know that different conclusions have been drawn from them, by persons, professing each to have prayed for, and trusting to have received, that spiritual help. Those therefore who speak of "solving every difficulty by reference to an unerring guide," so as to be "perfectly free from all tincture of error," must mean to refer to some *known* standard that shall decide *which* of the different interpretations of Scripture is the *right*, and *which* of the parties laying claim to the divine guidance of the unerring Spirit, is *really* so guided. That standard therefore, to which their ultimate appeal is in fact made, must be,—however disguised in words,—*their own* conviction, and their own unerring interpretation.

A sincere and candid appeal to the Scriptures themselves, made in charitable humility, and not as setting up our own judgment as the standard and *rule of faith to others*, consists in simply stating what we consider as the scriptural grounds for what we hold and teach; setting forth calmly, and without dogmatic arrogance, or bitter reproach, our reasons for believing that the sense we attach to the words of the Sacred Writers is correct, and consequently that a different interpretation is erroneous. And those who, after all, may not adopt the same conclusion, but whom we cannot *convict* of having been deficient in careful and candid research, or in humble prayer for divine grace, we must leave to the judgment of the All-seeing God: "judging nothing before the time, till the Lord come, who will make manifest the counsels of men's hearts."

This, indeed, is but one instance out of many that the extremes of what are called the High and Low Church parties are not so far asunder in substance as they are in outward guise. And upon this subject we may have something more to say in the next Caution.

No. XXVIII.

"Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them."—Rom. xvi. 17.

WE noticed, in the last two Cautions, some striking points in which the extremes of two great parties in our Church approach each other. But these are not the only instances that might be alleged; and perhaps that tendency to FACTION which appears in both may be a still more obvious example of the same thing.

We wish, however, to have it distinctly understood that we are far from imputing any factious *design* to those who originated those parties, or to those who have since—sometimes, perhaps, unconsciously—allowed themselves to be enrolled in them. We have little doubt that most of them did not at first sufficiently contemplate, from every point of view, what they were really doing. And hence they failed to advert to, and to guard against, the dangers which beset all those that engage in any party.

What we mean is, that, while each of these Parties forms professedly a portion of one and the same Church with the other, and with a great number of Christians besides, who are attached to neither party, each shows a strong disposition to confine all cordial feelings of fellowship to the peculiar circle of those who wear its own party-badge;—to work heartily and fairly in co-operation with no others (however it may sometimes use others as its tools); and to treat very much as a nullity every Authority or Institution of the Church that is not exercised or carried out in the way its party-leaders approve, or which at all stands in the way of its party-interests. Each party, in short, is strongly disposed to substitute *itself* for the Church.

We earnestly entreat, therefore, your patient attention to the Cautions we have to lay before you on a matter of such high

importance as that we are now considering. A vehement and eloquent declamation, setting forth in general terms the high value of some general object proposed, or censuring some flagrant departure from what is true and right, might better arrest the attention of many readers, and might make them regard, as comparatively dry and uninteresting, the detail of what will, perhaps, be called, "nice distinctions;" which, nevertheless, must be carefully attended to by those who would avoid the most serious errors.

Our aim is not to give mere present entertainment, but to guard against hurtful mistakes.

Observe, then, in the first place, that we do not mean to deny the existence, and the necessary existence, in every human mind, of something of the nature of what is commonly called *party-feeling*. This, we readily admit, is an integral part of human nature, which it would be wholly idle to attempt to root out.

"There is," says Bishop Butler, "such a natural principle of attraction in man towards man, that, having trod the same tract of land, having breathed in the same climate, barely having been born in the same artificial district or division, becomes the occasion of contracting acquaintances and familiarities many years after; for, anything may serve the purpose. Thus, relations merely nominal are sought and invented, not by Governors, but by the lowest of the people, which are found sufficient to hold mankind together in little fraternities and copartnerships, weak ties, indeed, and what may afford fund enough for ridicule; if they are absurdly considered as the real principles of that union; but they are, in truth, merely the *occasions*, as anything may be of anything, upon which our nature carries us on according to its own previous bent and bias; which occasions, therefore, would be nothing at all, were there not this prior disposition and bias of Nature."

Party-feeling, indeed, derives itself from the same springs as the love of kindred or of Country; and, though neither so sacred as the first, nor so noble as the second of these, is yet, in some shape or other, as natural as either. Man is, by his constitution, a Social Being; and *every band* that knits him to his fellows becomes an occasion for the exercise of his social affections: and we see plainly, in fact, that those, for example,

who belong to any class or Order in a State come to feel a peculiar interest in the maintenance of its power and respectability, and to resent, almost as a personal injury, whatever tends to lessen or obscure these. Such feelings may be, perhaps, most conspicuous in the Aristocracy; but they are in some degree common to all classes. Let but any casual circumstance occasion a rivalry between one Parish, or Guild, or even Club, and another, and that which the French call the *esprit de corps*, [attachment to the Body] shall be as plainly exhibited by humble mechanics as it could be by the proudest Patricians. And, as Butler says, "anything will serve the purpose" of cementing these artificial connexions. It seems as if mankind could not do without them; and in despotic States or Churches—where the safety of Government requires that such unions should be wholly disjoined from the weightier matters of religion and politics—the colour of a Friar's frock, or of a Racer's jacket, will afford as strong a foundation for a Party as an Article of Faith, or a maxim of political science.

Party-feeling, then, is, in its general nature, no other than *social feeling*—a portion of human nature which it is utterly impossible to eradicate, and which it would be utterly foolish to eradicate, if that were possible. But what we not only *can* but *ought* to do is, to keep it within its proper province, and to watch against and curb its abuses.

Now, it surely must be allowed to be an *abuse* of party-feeling when men's regard for some smaller knot or band within a Society, swallows up, or materially interferes with, the interest they ought to take in the whole Body, or weakens the tie of fellowship which should bind ALL the members of it together.

We are not saying that there ought to be no smaller knots or Bands within a great Society—especially, if it be (like our Church) a very large one. We do not say that all social feeling of this sort should be engrossed and *centralised* (as the modern phrase is) in the grand Community itself alone. On the contrary, we hold it to be a great advantage that a large Body should be thus, as it were, composed of separate compartments (like our Provinces, Dioceses, rural-deaneries, and Parishes); which arrangement, in a Society as in a literal building, makes the whole fabric stronger and more compact while it holds together, preserves the parts from ruin even when they are torn asunder, and thus renders a reconstruction of the injured Fabric

a more likely event, because an easier task: whereas a *centralised* community falls at once into hopeless anarchy, when the one central Authority is subverted; like loose materials that had been bound into a bundle by a single tie.

But, in order that such smaller *compartments* of a great Society should thus be advantageous to the whole, it is plainly requisite that their several interests should not clash with each other, or with that of the entire Community; but that each little knot should be connected with the rest, and subordinate to a common Authority. Otherwise, they will rend asunder, instead of strengthening the Body. Our feelings of attachment to them will be just and proper, so long—and only so long—as *they* are, and *we* regard them, as needful and subordinate *parts* of the entire system. For, even towards the most necessary parts of any social fabric, there is danger of an evil party-feeling springing up; since, even in their case, there is a natural tendency to overvalue them—to over-estimate (as it were) the size of the nearer object—and forget that they are *only parts* of something greater, which has still stronger claims upon our regard.

But how much greater is the danger of evil party-feeling, when there spring up within a Society artificial combinations which are *not* any regular parts of the structure and constitution of that Society?—and, still more, when members of the same State or Church, band themselves together in associations of which the common tie is some important matter of belief or practice, in which they are *at variance* with other members of the same Church?


In political affairs, we all know that the springing up of voluntary political *clubs*, and a strong tendency to substitute such irregular agencies for the authorized machinery of the Constitution, has been always regarded by wise men as one of the surest symptoms of approaching dissolution in a Commonwealth. It is a sign that the powers of life have withdrawn from the natural channels, by which they distribute health through the frame, and are breaking out into diseased action in the wrong places.

Now you may be sure that what is such a disastrous sign in a political society, cannot be a wholesome symptom in a religious one.

It is true, indeed, that the unhappy circumstances of our Church—left now, for a century, without any acting ecclesiastical legislature—any power of adapting its regular framework to the change of times—have rendered necessary the existence of certain Associations within it, not answering to anything that is to be found in any civil commonwealth,—voluntary private associations, for doing that which a Church ought to do *as a Church*, through some constitutional function of itself; such as, for example, the carrying on of foreign missions, and the providing for the spiritual wants of an increasing population at home.

Where gaps of this kind are left in the constitution of a Society, and no regular means of supplying them provided, they must be provided for by means more or less irregular. But that there should *be* such gaps left, is surely in itself a great evil. The marvel is, that, labouring as we do under such disadvantages, the old framework of our Church has not long since disappeared; and it is a strong proof of the inherent vitality of our system that the ancient Authorities of our Church—our Archbishops, and Bishops, and Rectors, &c.—are still something more than mere NAMES of dignity;—mere pieces of official pageantry;—like the Archons of the latter days of the Athenian Republic, or the Consuls under the Roman emperors.

But even the strongest natural constitution will not hold out for ever without some moderate amount of care to preserve it. And, therefore, while we admit the necessity, in the Church's present state, of such voluntary associations as we have alluded to, we should the more earnestly seek to keep them within the bounds which are absolutely needful to prevent them from becoming positively mischievous. In the first place, then, there should be, in every such association, some *plain and definite object*; and a *plain and definite way*, settled beforehand, of carrying out that object. It should propose to itself, for instance, the circulation of certain specified books; or the support of certain seminaries, conducted according to rules distinctly laid down; or the like. It should not be an Association for the vague, general purpose of "carrying out such and such principles," or "counteracting such and such a class of evils," in whatever way may hereafter be determined on by the leading members. If this important caution be not attended to in the



outset, it will be hardly possible to guard the Association from becoming a dangerous Faction.

For, we should remember, that there is, in every organized combination of men, a strong tendency to prefer the immediate interest of the combination—the increase of its power, and the strengthening of the ties which bind it together—to the remoter end for which the Association was originally formed. The Association is looked upon as the necessary and adequate means of accomplishing some important purpose; and all the sentiments of zeal and respect proper to that purpose are soon insensibly transferred to the engine by which it is to be accomplished. Hence, the maintenance and strengthening of the Party become soon the first object of all its members, and the thoughts of both leaders and followers are engrossed with plans for enlarging or cementing it. Thus it not unfrequently happens that, eventually, the very ends for which the Party was framed, are lost in the struggle to maintain the Party itself.

And of this we may see a remarkable instance in the History of the Great Rebellion in our own land. The Patriots, who opposed the tyranny of Charles I., considered (and justly) the *country-party*, as it was called, in the House of Commons, as the grand bulwark of their liberties against the oppressive invasions of the Court. But the issue was, that, while they forgot everything else in their zeal to strengthen the hands of that party, they not only overturned the Monarchy and the Aristocracy, and subverted the very Constitution in behalf of which they professed, and long believed themselves, to be contending, but entirely changed the character of that party itself: which soon no longer represented the sentiments of the country, but only the factious interests of the party-leaders.

Now the danger of which we have been speaking will manifestly increase, in proportion as the ultimate end of a Party is vague, general, or incapable of being immediately effected: because these circumstances will make it hard to prosecute such an end *directly*. Hence, the ultimate end will be gradually withdrawn from men's minds, and their attention fixed upon subordinate measures, which are taken in the meanwhile for the ostensible purpose of *preparing* for its accomplishment. It not uncommonly happens in such cases, that the original purpose of an Association disappears entirely from men's thoughts, and

that parties are held together by the magic of some watchword, which is supposed to describe their ultimate design, but of the meaning of which, few, if any, of the partisans ever troubled themselves to form any accurate conception. Men take it for granted that their party must be serving the purposes for which they profess to be incorporated,—and that, therefore, whatever tends to advance it, must tend also to further those purposes. And they fall into this error the more readily wherever it requires some exertion of mind to gain exact notions of those purposes, and to compare them with the measures which the party is actually pursuing. But with respect to the secondary interests of the party, and the accidental advantages and dangers thence accruing to themselves and to their friends, there is no such difficulty. These are things that come home to them in such a manner as not to admit of mistake; and thus a habit of steady regard to *them* is formed, which the revered Watchword of the Faction serves to consecrate as Patriotism or Piety;—like the name of some ancient Saint, whose relics are buried under the altar, and give sanctity to the building, while his acts and sayings lie neglected in the pages of some Moth-eaten Martyrology.

But further—the immediate effect of a combination of persons into anything like an organized Association, is to throw a large amount of weight and power into the hands of the leading members;—those who undertake its management. And it is obvious that, where the terms of the original compact which binds the members together are *indefinite*, and few things distinctly *marked out beforehand*, as what the Association is to do, the temptation to the leaders of the party to use its weight and influence for such purposes as *they* may chuse, without regard to the wishes of individual members, will be very strong. Thus men may, undesignedly, by joining such a combination, lend all their weight and influence to the accomplishing of some object which they never contemplated, and which, if they had been originally consulted, they would have refused to further.

It is true that a man *may*, if he will, withdraw from, and disown, a party which he has formerly belonged to. But this is a step which requires no small degree of moral courage. And not only are we strongly tempted to shrink from taking

such a step, but also our dread of doing so is likely rather to mislead our reason, than to overpower it. A man will wish to think it justifiable to adhere to the party; and this wish is likely to bias his judgment, rather than to prevail on him to act contrary to his judgment.

For, we know how much the judgment of men is likely to be *biased*, as well as how much they are tempted to acquiesce in something *against* their judgment, when earnestly pressed by the majority of those who are acting with them,—whom they look up to,—whose approbation encourages them,—and whose censure they cannot but dread.

Some doctrine, suppose, is promulgated, or measure proposed, or mode of procedure commenced, which some members of a party do not, in their unbiassed judgment, approve. But any one of them is disposed, first to *wish*, then to *hope*, and lastly to *believe*, that those are in the right whom he would be sorry to think wrong. And again, in any case where his judgment may still be unchanged, he may feel that it is but a *small* concession he is called on to make, and that there are *great* benefits to set against it; and that, after all, he is perhaps called on merely to *acquiesce silently* in what he does not quite approve; and, he is loth to incur censure, as lukewarm in the good cause,—as presumptuous,—as unfriendly towards those who are acting with him. To be ‘a breaker up of the Club’ (*ἑταίριας διαλυτρῆς*) was a reproach, the dread of which, we learn from the great historian of Greece, carried much weight with it in the transactions of the party-warfare he is describing. And we may expect the like in all similar cases.

One may sometimes hear a person say in so many words—though far oftener, in his conduct—“It is true I do not altogether approve of such and such a step; but it is insisted on as essential by those who are acting with us; and if we were to hold out against it, we should lose their co-operation; which would be a most serious evil. There is nothing to be done, therefore, but to comply.”

Hence it is that persons of much experience in human affairs lay it down as a maxim, that “you can never fully *trust* a party-man,” however sound his own judgment, and however pure the principles on which he acts when left to himself. A sensible and upright man who keeps himself unconnected with party,

may be *calculated* on, as likely to *act* on the views which you have found him to take on each point. In some things perhaps you may find him to differ from you; in others to agree; but when you have learned what his sentiments are, you know in each case what to *expect*. But it is not so with one who is connected with, and consequently controlled by, a party. In proportion as he is so, he is not fully his own master; and in some instances you will probably find him take you quite by surprise, by assenting to some measure, or pursuing some course, quite at variance with the sentiments which you had heard him express—probably with perfect sincerity—as his own.

Judging from actual appearances, one would say that some process of this sort went on in the minds of the Members of the Tract-party, from the time when they first combined for the vague purpose of supporting and diffusing something which they called CATHOLIC PRINCIPLES, or Church-principles. Certain it is, that that party went on, step by step, towards such tenets and such measures as one can hardly think were at first contemplated by many of its members.*

And it is very observable that, by little and little, they came to adopt notions and practices completely *at variance* with what they had themselves set out with. Their extreme reverence for the Rubrics and Ordinances of our Church ended in their introducing innovations totally at variance, both in letter and spirit, with what our Reformers enjoined. Their devoted veneration for episcopal authority was found to be compatible with the most insolent disregard for every individual bishop who did not acquiesce in their proceedings. Their professed veneration for the Articles, ended in a system of “non-natural” interpretation, such as might allow a Mahometan to be a member of the Church. And those who had begun by an almost idolatrous reverence for antiquity, and by inculcating such a rigid adherence to the tenets and practices of the primitive Fathers as placed these practically on a level with the inspired Writers,—these very men have at last discovered that neither those Fathers, nor the Apostles themselves, were in possession of the whole Gospel, but that it is to be sought for in the “developments” of subsequent ages, and of those yet to come.

The same thing has often occurred, in a very remarkable

* See Caution XIII.

manner, in political as well as religious associations. No candid,—we believe we might say even no *uncandid*,—person can doubt that several men who were, originally at least, sincerely patriotic and loyal, were drawn in to join, unsuspectingly, that Association which afterwards attained such fearful notoriety,—the United Irishmen. The avowed object of that combination, and, doubtless, the real object of many who became members of it, was to obtain the redress, by legitimate means, of sundry real and heavy grievances under which Ireland laboured. The goodness of the end proposed was likely to prove seductive; and as for the precise measures to be adopted for accomplishing it, these were not definitely laid down in the outset; nor is it improbable that this very indefiniteness was alleged by some persons as an answer to objections, or rather as a bar to the raising of any objections, and a plea by which to silence every expression of suspicion. It would be unfair,—some would probably urge,—to condemn by a prejudgment those who have not as yet taken *any* step, or even resolved *what* steps they shall take. It will be time enough to draw back when anything objectionable shall arise.

But the wiser portion of mankind would regard this very indefiniteness as in itself a strong objection,—as a reason for withholding their concurrence,—and as a fair ground of suspicion. When an army (they would urge) is to be first raised, and organized, and armed, and disciplined, and officered, and it is left as a matter for after-consideration in what direction they are to march, and what operations they are to undertake, one had need have the most implicit confidence in their leaders not to regard with the greatest alarm such a procedure.

Some, however, there doubtless were, who, entertaining originally no evil designs, were seduced by specious appearances and fair professions, and did not enough consider that when once embarked on the stream of Party, no one can be sure how far he may ultimately be carried. They found themselves (doubtless most unexpectedly to many of them) engaged in an attempted revolution, and partners of men in actual rebellion.

No doubt many did draw back, though not without difficulty, and danger, and shame, when they perceived whither they were being hurried; though it is also highly probable that many were prevented by that difficulty and shame from stopping short and

turning back in time; and, having "stepped in so far," persevered in a course which, if it had been originally proposed to them, they would have shrunk from with horror, saying, "Is thy servant a dog that he should do this great thing?"

Clear, however, as is the lesson which History affords in all departments of life, as to the dangers likely to result from party-combinations, one may find some persons so far from taking warning from experience, that this very experience even holds out an inducement to them to plunge into the very danger against which it ought to have put them on their guard. For it is notorious that parties are apt to generate parties; men's dread and abhorrence of the extreme into which some party has been hurried, leading them too often to form an opposite party, that, before long, rushes into an extreme on the opposite side.

There is a maxim current, that "when bad men combine, good men must unite," which, as it is commonly applied, has done great mischief, by favouring, in practice, the error of copying ourselves the very procedure we condemn in others. We know not whether any distinction is made, to which importance is attached, between the words "combine" and "unite;" but undoubtedly, if we find that there is some *definite* measure, in itself good, such as is, for instance, the distribution of Bibles and Prayer-books, and certain other specified books, which can be better carried into effect by our joint exertions than by any separate course of action, we are perfectly right in joining, uniting, or combining (be the term used what it may), for that defined and specific purpose. Nor ought we to be afraid or ashamed of following in this the examples of others who may combine in the same way for some different object; perhaps for an object which we may think a bad one. We could not, for instance, pass any censure, except in reference to the object itself, on a Society of Mahometans that should be formed for the distribution of the Koran. We disapprove, indeed, of the book itself; but the example of circulating what they believe to be divine truth is one which all men ought to follow in reference to the books which they respectively hold sacred.

But it is a far different case when the character,—the very system of the combination itself,—is something objectionable;

—when men unite *indefinitely* for the carrying out of certain general principles, in such ways as may hereafter be resolved on by the leaders (whether many or few) to whom they have intrusted the conduct of affairs: and who, we may be sure, from all experience of the past, will take upon them to explain and to apply those principles as they think fit, and to devise measures accordingly. It is then that great, and, indeed, almost boundless confidence is necessarily reposed in the integrity and wisdom of those leaders. It is then that we usually find the members of such a coalition led on, step by step, into much that they would originally have disapproved. It is then that we justly censure the very plan and system of the Association as alarmingly dangerous; and that, consequently, we are bound to abstain from following such an example, and from endeavouring to counteract one evil by introducing another, of an analogous character, on the opposite side. For if, after having seen,—and, indeed, in consequence of having seen,—into what pernicious extremes men may be gradually led, through the influence of party, we adopt a similar course ourselves to that which we blame in others, we are not only responsible for the immediate consequences,—for any contrary extremes that may result from our own procedure,—but we are also preparing the way for a fresh and opposite reaction in the other direction,—for new coalitions of a like indefinite character, successively engendering one another to an unlimited extent.

A second very important Caution to be borne in mind in framing any such Association as we are speaking of, is that its object and structure should be in harmony with those of our Church. Its object should be something which the design of the Church obviously points to, but for which the Church's present machinery is inadequate, *however faithfully worked*. And its structure should, as far as possible, resemble the original machinery to which it is superadded. Associations, professing to be *Church-Associations*, should not be framed in such a manner as, either directly or indirectly, to exclude any of those who are admitted and fairly entitled to an equal share in all the privileges of the Church. There should be no attempt, open or covert, to make the foundation narrower than that of the Church itself, or to exclude men of sentiments not condemned by the Church, though disliked by particular members of it; and every

care should be taken to procure the aid and co-operation of the official Rulers of the Church, and secure to them the foremost place of weight and influence. The tendency of any other course is to split our Church into two; and to make in each section of it (so far as each follows such pernicious methods) the private individuals who lead it and enjoy its confidence, practically and in reality, the Heads and Governors of those divisions, taking the place of the regular Authorities to whom the constitution of the Church designs that power should be committed.

The so-called EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE is an instance of a Body framed with a total neglect of both the Cautions we have laid before you.* Its object is *indefinite*; and for that object no distinct method of useful co-operation has ever been laid down: and so far as it was an Association extending itself within our Church, it was attended with all the evils which we have noticed as likely to result from a neglect of our second warning. For in this case the bond of connexion was subscription to a set of peculiar Articles of Faith, put forward apparently as the sum and substance of EVANGELICAL TRUTH. Now the direct tendency of such an apparent assumption is to stamp all who refuse to join such a Body, as persons opposed, or at least strangers to the Gospel.

We are aware, indeed, that all intentions have been strenuously denied of refusing to reckon as *Christians* even those who are accounted inadmissible into the *Evangelical Alliance*. But it is very difficult to maintain a distinction where there is, according to the received and intelligible use of language, no difference. By a *Christian*, is understood, not merely any one who believes that such a person as Jesus of Nazareth existed, but one who receives the Gospel—EVANGELIUM—of Jesus Christ. A man may, indeed, hold more or less of error intermixed with Gospel-truth; he may more or less have corrupted, or imperfectly embraced, the truth; and may, accordingly, be more or less imperfectly evangelical—imperfectly christian: but to whatever extent he is *christian*, to the same extent he must be *evangelical*. To ask whether all Christians are evangelical, seems like asking whether all men are human. A person may,

* There are at present some other "Associations," "Alliances," "Clubs," "Societies," &c., established for some purposes connected with religion. How far our observations do or do not apply to each, or any of these, must be decided from a view of the constitution of each.

indeed, be more or less deficient in rationality, or in some other attribute of the human species; but to say that so far as any Being is to be accounted a *man*, he must be accounted *human* would be reckoned not only a self-evident, but an identical proposition. And so, also, according to any intelligible definition of christianity, it must be equally self-evident that, to whatever extent any one has embraced christianity, his religion is evangelical.

Those, therefore, who draw a distinction, and insist on it as an important one (though, certainly, none such is recognised in Scripture), between *christianity*, and *evangelical religion*, lay themselves open to the suspicion of putting forth, as a Gospel, some devices of their own which are distinct from christianity, and form no part of what was originally taught as the "good tidings"—or Gospel—of Christ Himself. And this is a matter which calls for serious consideration; for, "if any man," says the apostle, "or even an angel from heaven, preach *some other* Gospel, let him be accursed." It is deeply to be regretted that any, who bear the christian name, should either deserve such an imputation, or should, by indiscretion, lay themselves open to it, if undeserved.

In the case of this Alliance, indeed, the vastness of its bulk, and the incongruity of its materials,* have hitherto prevented its assuming the appearance of an active Faction; but its machinery may yet fall into the hands of some more powerful workmen than have hitherto appeared, and be turned to very dangerous purposes. Meanwhile, the very existence of such a Body—so utterly powerless for its professed objects,—and yet claiming ostensibly to represent the whole Fraternity of orthodox Protestants—affords an occasion of scandal which it would be well to remove. It looks like a vain effort to keep up the semblance and shadow of an Unity, which does not exist in substance. And as for the real agreement which exists among Protestant Churches, in the most important Articles, that is far more strikingly brought out by their separate and *independent* testimony, *without mutual concert*, to those doctrines, than it could be by any compact to uphold and profess them.

But still more dangerous at present are the private Associa-

* For it includes, along with members of our Church, persons who are actually members of another Association, framed expressly and avowedly for the very purpose of overthrowing the Established Church; besides many others who oppose and condemn its doctrines and worship.

tions within the Church, which seem to be springing up, the declared object of which is to take the management of the Church out of the hands of the constituted Authorities, and place it in their own;—to denounce before the *tribunal of public opinion* such Bishops and Pastors as they deem unfaithful;—and to carry on an organized System of Ecclesiastical Agitation on their own side, in opposition to the system of agitation pursued by the Tractites on the other.

Such a proceeding as this is in reality attempting a *Revolution*; though it is probable that many of those who have been led to join in it, have done so without any such thought. And though we are far from saying that an Ecclesiastical Revolution should never be attempted, we are quite sure that it should never be attempted but in the last extremity. And when it is attempted, it should be *seen to be what it is*, by all who are engaged in it. Nor will any wise man engage in such an attempt, without all possible security that the issue will not be something more intolerable than the evils which provoked it:—without providing beforehand the means of substituting some better constitution, or some safer Rulers than the frame-work which he seeks to break up, and the Governors whom he endeavours to depose.

Our own happy political Revolution in 1688 owed its success mainly, under God, to the prudence with which it was planned—the forecast that was used—and the care that was taken to ensure that the weight and influence, the rank and the wisdom of the country, should be at the head of the movement. Yet even that unparalleled movement took a turn, in the event—fortunate, indeed, as it proved, yet quite different from what the majority of those who at first engaged in it, ever expected—the Settlement of the Crown first upon King William, and then upon the House of Hanover, with a total exclusion of James II. and his direct male heirs. Again, look to the case of France. However satisfactory any one may think the present state of things there to be, no one can doubt that the men of *republican* principles who dethroned Louis Philippe in 1848, were as far from expecting the actual result, as they were from desiring it. So hard is it to calculate beforehand what will be the issue of a great change in an old established Society!

Of one thing, however, we may be quite certain beforehand; that such changes cannot be effected, in a Church, without

violent contentions, and great scandal to our common christianity; and that (especially in such an age as this) the Infidel cannot fail of deriving an advantage from every conflict between opposing parties in the Church. He will not fail to exult in our contests, and draw his own inference from them; while, meantime, our attention will be drawn off from his attacks, to an unhappy strife with our own brethren.

In reality, as we have several times endeavoured to point out in the course of these Cautions, Infidelity, or at least that approach to Infidelity, the absence of a well-grounded and firm belief,—is among the chief causes of the present evils under which we suffer. Men's faith was not fixed upon that foundation of rational evidence upon which Christ and his Apostles placed it. No proportionate care was taken to make men's knowledge of that evidence keep pace with the advance of their knowledge of other things; and then, when doubts began to spread, it was sought to restore or to confirm belief, by appealing to the imagination and the feelings, rather than to the reason. Those who hardly agreed in anything else, agreed in dreading to take the only safe course. While one party told men to trust the Church on its own word, and the other to trust the Scripture without one intelligible reason for believing it divine, what wonder is it that so many have made up their minds to trust neither, and so many more are vainly struggling to maintain a firm faith without a firm foundation for it?

The strength indeed of the Infidel is in our weakness and folly; and it is our groundless fears which make him formidable. For, the truth is, that against the substance of Christianity itself, as distinguished from human perversions of it, modern Infidelity—however it may boast of new discoveries—has nothing more to say, than has been said and refuted a thousand times. It may seem to present a terrible form in the obscurity which German metaphysics have thrown around it; but upon a nearer view, the spectre will resolve itself into the old worn-out clothes of Collins, and Toland, and Chubb, and Hume, which are now too soiled and threadbare to be exhibited openly in the daylight.

This is the subject to which we are hastening in the next Caution.

May, 1853.

No. XXIX. •

"We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we make known unto you the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty."
—2 PET. i. 16.

IN this, the concluding Number of the Series, we propose to lay before you a brief caution against a class of dangers somewhat different from what we have hitherto noticed;—against certain modes of arguing and certain kinds of language which are but too often to be met with in the present day, both among Christian writers, and those who are (more or less openly) opposed to Christianity.

The injury done by vague and indeterminate forms of expression upon practical subjects—such as Theology, Morals, and Politics—has been well compared to the mischievous effects of a London fog. The danger in both cases arises from the *mixture* of light and obscurity. If the absence of light were total, and the darkness were, like that of Egypt, "a darkness that might be felt,"—an entire suspension of all human activity would ensue. "They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place." But the light in a fog is just sufficient to tempt men to continue their business, and venture abroad; though not enough to save them from the risk of running against a lamp-post, or stumbling down a cellar. So likewise, in the case of an intellectual haze, the great danger is, that men, with nothing better than half-views and glimmering notions of things, will nevertheless judge and act as confidently as if they were judging and acting in the broad day-light of clear reason.

But there is another peculiar danger connected with some intellectual fogs, for which it is less easy to find a parallel. The citizens of London, though pretty well accustomed to November-mists, are never known to *fall in love* with the grand obscurity of that mysterious state of the atmosphere, or to persuade themselves that they can then cross Fleet-street most safely when they cannot distinguish an omnibus from a dog-cart. But let the

reader imagine to himself, if he can, a mist so resplendent with gay prismatic colours,—such “gorgeous canopy of golden air”—as that men should forget its inconvenience in their admiration of its beauty, and a kind of *nebular taste* should prevail for preferring that glorious dimness to vulgar day-light. Nothing short of such a case as this could afford a parallel to the mischief done to the public mind by some late writers, at present very popular in England and America;—a sort of “children of the mist,” who wage war upon Christianity under cover of the twilight. These persons have long been accustoming their disciples to admire, as a style truly philosophical, what can hardly be described otherwise than as a certain haze of words imperfectly understood, through which some remote ideas, scarcely distinguishable in their outlines, *loom* as it were upon the view, in a kind of dusky grandeur which vastly exaggerates their proportions.

It is chiefly in such foggy forms that the metaphysics and theology of Germany, for instance, are every day exercising a greater influence on popular literature; and their practical effect is felt much more in a distaste and even contempt for everything of home-growth than in substituting anything definite in its place. It has been, indeed, carefully instilled into men’s minds that Germany has something far more profound to give than anything hitherto extant in our native literature; but *what* that profound “something” is, appears not at all so generally understood by the mass of its admirers. We are willing to suppose that the gentlemen who have set this fashion have, in their private studies, acquired a more exact acquaintance with it than they deem it needful to exhibit in their writings; but we are pretty sure that many of their disciples are content to take matters upon trust, and believe with an implicit faith that what seems such *hard* thinking must be accurate thinking also. And many would, no doubt, throw aside as trivial, or even perhaps as stark folly—if stated in plain English—what they now admire as recondite wisdom, precisely because they only half understand it.

With such persons it is a maxim highly applauded that “a *clear* idea is generally a *little* idea.” They estimate the depth of thought as an unskilful eye would estimate the depth of water. Muddy water is apt to be supposed deeper than it is, because you cannot see to the bottom. Very clear water, on the contrary, will always seem *less* deep than it is, because it is so

thoroughly penetrated by the sight. We fancy that the idea must have been always obvious to every one, because every one can so easily take it in when thus plainly presented to his mind; as if it required less labour and skill to furnish gold in the elegant and convenient shape of coin, than to bring into the market rough and ponderous masses of the precious metal embedded in a rock of quartz.

Bacon is a striking instance of a genius who could think so profoundly, and at the same time so clearly, that an ordinary man understands readily most of his wisest sayings; and perhaps thinks them so self-evident as hardly to need mention. But, on reconsideration, you perceive more and more, how many important applications one of his maxims will have, and how often it has been overlooked; and on returning to it again and again, fresh views of its importance will open on you. One of his sayings will be like one of the heavenly bodies that is visible to the naked eye, but in which you see more and more, the better the telescope you apply to it. The "dark sayings" of some other famous writers, on the other hand, may be compared to a fog-bank at sea, which the mariner, at first glance, takes for a chain of majestic mountains, but which, when he turns his glass upon it, proves nothing more than a shapeless heap of unwholesome vapours. When such maxims accordingly are translated into ordinary language, they too often lose the appearance not only of wisdom, but of sense. And the attempt to put them into any shape in which they can be intelligently applied to practice is like trying to make a comfortable dress out of some very old piece of brocade, that looks rich and sound in the chest; but when you bring it to the light, and shake out its folds in the air, the colours fly, and the fabric falls to tatters in a moment.

But, besides the advantage which the writers we are speaking of derive from their cloudy style, in hiding their scantiness, or their want, of meaning, there is another still more important for their purpose. It enables them to conceal from the unwary the fact of their being decidedly *antichristian*; and for this purpose it seems to be deliberately and very largely used.

Now, this is a much graver offence than merely passing off trivial talk, or even absurdity, under the guise of profound metaphysics. No man has a *right* to call himself a Christian, if he

be not a Christian in the ordinary acceptance of the word—if he do not, for example, believe that Jesus Christ really rose from the dead, according to the Scriptures. This common acceptance of the term Christian will indeed include many who hold what appear to us very false notions of Christianity—as, for instance, the Unitarians. But we must take language as we find it. The true meaning of a word is *what is commonly understood* by it; neither more nor less. And to go on any other ground would involve us in difficulties we could never get out of.

There are—to take an obvious instance—months which are called (most absurdly as far as etymology goes) September, October, November, December. Now, would it be allowable to say, on the one hand, "September is not, and cannot be, the name of the ninth month, because *septem* means, in Latin, not *nine*, but *seven*?" Or, on the other hand, "*I mean by September what you call January*; and I have a right to my own opinion?" So you have, it would be answered, but not to frame a new language, and call it English.

So it is with the word Christian. We are not justified in denying that title to an Unitarian, on the ground that he denies what we hold as an essential doctrine of Christianity. Nor would a Roman-catholic be justified in refusing it to all but members of what he regards as the only *true Church*; or a Baptist, to all except those whom he considers really baptized persons.

But then it is still more monstrous to pretend that one who denies *all Revelation* and all divine mission of Jesus Christ, and all the miraculous facts of our Religion, can be properly styled a Christian. A Christian—whatever any one may conceive the word *ought* to mean—does mean, in ordinary speech, neither more nor less than one who regards Jesus Christ as *the founder of his religion*, and as *coming from God*. And if we were to tamper with the ordinary meaning of the word, we might at once put an end to some late political disputes, and enable not only Jews but Mahometans also, to make oath "on the true faith of a Christian." For, etymologically, a Jew may be called a Christian, since he believes in a *Christ* or Messiah yet to come. And Mahometans go further, for they believe that Jesus was the promised Messiah, though they do not regard Him as the Founder of their religion. Might not, then, either Jews or Mahometans take the

declaration to which we have referred, with far greater consistency than those who are Christians only in the transcendental sense, of believing that Jesus of Nazareth taught, in the main, and with some blemishes, a pure and beautiful morality—that the incidents—some real and some imaginary—of his life were highly picturesque, and the circumstances of his death very touching—and that He stands in the same rank of great minds as Pythagoras, Socrates, and Confucius?

And, indeed, if such sentiments were *distinctly* avowed, the inconsistency would be soon discovered. But the cloudy and ambiguous style in which they are propounded often shelters from detection those who hold them, and who studiously make use of christian language, while subverting the very foundation of Christianity.

How long and how extensively this dishonest practice was carried on in Germany, those who are acquainted with its literature are aware. *There*, however, at present, it has now for some years begun to go out of vogue. How long it may yet continue in fashion here, it is difficult to calculate. *We*, in these countries, are apt to lag behind the rest of Europe in our fashions. We take up some peculiarity of our continental neighbours just when it has become so soiled and common in its native place, as to be on the eve of being cast aside. As Falstaff would express it, "We sing the tunes the carmen whistle:" and therefore it is probable that the defenders of Christianity will for some time longer have to fight with phantom-enemies in the dark.

But there are some symptoms even among us, of an increasing disposition, on the part of infidels, to speak out; and such symptoms should be hailed with gladness by all the friends of truth. When the exact nature of objections is known, it will be the more easy to find their just value, and to see whether they are really objections against *Christianity*, or against something that has been *mistaken* for it.

Now, this last, is a matter of great importance; and we believe that, in point of fact, at least one half of the arguments which have commonly made men infidels, were arguments not against the religion delivered by Christ and his Apostles, but against some misrepresentations of that religion, or some speculative theory which had been blended with it.

If the ultimate result of the mischief done by such arguments

be to make Christians more cautious to ascertain exactly what Christ *did*, and what He did *not* teach, this cannot fail of proving in the end serviceable to the Faith which they are urged to destroy.

For, the current philosophy, and the current Theology, of any one period in the history of the human mind, are rarely quite free from all error and misconception; and the result of blending them together, under such circumstances, is commonly to multiply errors in a rapidly increasing proportion—to confirm and to perpetuate them: or to expose the truth along with the error to the same risks. For so it often happens. The errors of philosophy are first consecrated by a union with religion. Some mistaken piece of false science seems to countenance some ill-considered interpretation of Scripture; and then that rash interpretation is immediately acquiesced in, and the supposed harmony between Reason and Revelation is felt to give a kind of sanction to the unhappy union. For a long time the tie is strong enough to maintain the credit of both errors. But when this is no longer possible, and the scientific error is clearly exposed and exploded, the misfortune is, that, to many minds, the tie between it and Revelation still seems indissoluble; and the authority which once *upheld* the error must, in their apprehension, now *sink* along with it. The ill-built wall which had been “daubed with untempered mortar,” will be likely, in its fall, to pull down the rest of the building with it.

We have but too many instances of such mischief in the history of the Scholastic Philosophy,—a history which shows that Science, when condemned to work in chains as the bond-slave of Theology, takes at last a stern revenge on its oppressor. For, the errors of that philosophy served, whilst undetected, to introduce and countenance a great deal of what was unsound in religion; and afterwards, when those errors were detected, created a prejudice against even what was most sound and valuable. The subserviency of the slave gradually corrupted the character of the mistress, till, finding her powerless and despicable, he broke his chains, and assumed the attitude not only of independence, but of hostility.

And we have an instance of the same thing in the rash speculations about Noah’s Flood, and the manner of the Creation of the universe, which have, from time to time, been drawn from

hasty inferences from Geology imperfectly understood, and then grafted, as it were, upon the Sacred Text.

The results of such ill-assorted unions remind one of the old fables about the Race who are said to have sprung from the marriages of Angels and women, and who are described as inheriting the superhuman strength of one parent, and the moral weakness of the other. Thus, the spurious issue of such a rash blending of Philosophy and Revelation, is mighty only for mischief. It is Human error borrowing the rank and influence of a Divine ancestry.

And, it is worth observing that, apparently "to cut off occasion from those who desire occasion" of thus blending human Science with Revelation—the Scriptures never speak on scientific subjects except in the most popular language—openly disclaiming, as it were, all pretensions to exactness upon such matters; and that, though some of the Sacred Writers—as Solomon, for instance—did (but not under the influence of inspiration), compose works upon such subjects, God's providence has ordered things so that none of those works have come down to us. The things which Man could discover by his own reason, God has generally *left* Man to discover by his own reason; and the things which the divine Spirit has revealed, are such as "eye had not seen, nor ear heard, nor had it entered into the heart of man to conceive."

Such objections, then, as we have been speaking of, may possibly be turned to a good use. They may lead men to re-examine the grounds on which they believe some popular tenets to be parts of Revelation, or parts of true Science; and thus they will eventually serve the interest of both. For, in Theology, and also in Philosophy, our prejudices are constantly making their way unobserved into the inferences we draw from facts; and the mistakes thus brought into our Creeds in both, might lie for ages undetected, if we were not thus put upon re-examining the reasons for them. And thus conclusions that, by long acquiescence in them, had come to pass for unquestionable maxims, will often be found to rest on unsound premises. But woe to him who has so obstinately identified the current creed of any particular age or party, with absolute Truth, as to refuse to listen to these providential warnings! For, if the furniture of the Mind be not from time to time scrupulously reviewed, our Understanding, which should be the Temple of Truth, will be crowded with the Idols

of Fancy. We shall be offended at the light of reason, and exclude it more and more from the darkened shrine; and the hideous or obscene Images of Falsehood will be sheltered behind the veil of religious mystery.

Many of the most weighty objections, then, popularly urged at present against Christianity, you will find, on a careful consideration of them to be not objections against Christianity, but against something which has been grafted upon Christianity. But besides these, you will also meet with some objections against Christianity itself, which must, as long as we are in this present state of imperfection, appear objections of great real weight.

Now, this should neither surprise nor dishearten you; for the condition of Christianity in this respect—of being open to many seemingly weighty objections—is the condition of almost all the best attested facts in History, and even the most certain principles of Science itself. The stories of Julius Cæsar, or of Napoleon Bonaparte, for instance, are full of things *in themselves* quite *improbable*; which yet we believe to have happened, because it is *more improbable* still that the testimony on which those stories rest should be false.* “There are,” said Dr. Johnson, “objections against a *plenum*, and objections against a *vacuum*; but one of them must be true.” And a wise man will, in such cases, believe that which involves, on the whole, least improbability.

Now if you look into Infidel publications, either of the present or of almost any past age, you will find them filled from one end to the other with *objections* against Christianity, rather than with answers to the arguments for it. This is a prominent feature on the face of the controversy between Christians and their opponents, which must strike every observer. The writings of Infidels—even those little deserving notice—have in almost every instance been (whether ably or not) carefully answered, from point to point, by christian authors; and, in the last century, this was done so effectually, that the Infidels were notoriously driven out of the field, and reduced to a silence in England which has only of late years begun to be broken. Scarcely any one would venture to deny the vast superiority of Clarke, and Butler, and Warburton, over Chubb and Tindal, and Collins and Bolingbroke.

But on the christian side, there are many works of high cha-

* See *Historic Doubts relative to Napoleon Buonaparte*, and also *Historic Certainties*.

racter—well known, standard and popular books—setting forth the direct proofs of Christianity, such as Leslie's *Short Method*, Paley's *Evidences*, and *Horæ Paulinæ*, Lardner's *Credibility and Testimonies*, and the *Lessons on Christian Evidence*, to which we have before referred you—besides many other works—to which, as far as we know, NO INFIDEL HAS EVEN PROFESSED TO WRITE AN ANSWER. The Infidel always *chuses* his own position; and the position which he *chuses* is always that of the assailant.

Now if, in any other branch of knowledge, men were thus to neglect almost entirely the positive evidence *for* any truth, and to put forth all their ingenuity in pressing the objections *against* it, is there any truth which might not be as successfully involved in doubt as the divine mission of Jesus?

We do not, of course, propose to go through and answer, one by one, the popular objections against Christianity now current. That would require a new set of Cautions entirely devoted to that one particular object. But what we wish specially to observe, is that you should not permit Infidels, when you meet them, to deal only in *objections* against Christianity; but you should remind them that they, as well as we, have difficulties to account for; and that the real question is, which party is the more credulous—*they* who believe that such a Religion as Christianity came from *man*—or *we*, who believe that it came from God.

This is the real question; and, with respect to it, each party may be described as both believers and disbelievers. *They disbelieve* the *divine* origin of Christianity, and we *believe* it. *We disbelieve* the *human* origin of Christianity, which they, on the other hand, *believe*.

When, therefore, they ask, Is it likely that Christianity came from God?—they may be fairly met with the question, Is it likely that Christianity came from Man? This latter is much the fairer and more rational kind of inquiry, because we are much better able to judge what might reasonably be expected from Man than from God. For, human nature is our *own* nature; and we have within ourselves, and in our daily experience of other men, and in the records of history, a good rule to guide us in judging what Man is, or is not, likely to do or say; and there are plenty of religions, notoriously human in their origin, with which Christianity may be compared. But “God’s ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts like our thoughts.” He

is an Infinite Being, who seems to be carrying on a great plan of Providence through countless ages and over innumerable worlds; and therefore we must be conscious that we know but little directly of his nature, and have but a small experience of his ways of acting towards his creatures. It is much safer, consequently, to argue that Christianity did not come from Man, because it is not such as might be reasonably expected from Man, than to argue, that it did not come from God because it seems to us not such, in all respects, as the Deity would be likely to deliver to us.

It is true that Infidels are able to point out many circumstances in which Christianity resembles all the false religions that ever were invented. But this you will observe is no more a proof of its falsity than the fact that counterfeit coin resembles lawful money is a proof that there is no such thing as lawful money, or that there is no way of distinguishing between good money and bad. What they are bound to show, if they can, is—not that there are resemblances between Christianity and other religions—but that there is no essential difference to indicate a different origin.

You should, therefore, call upon them to explain how—if Christianity be the invention of Man—it comes to pass that it *differs* so materially from all other religions invented by Man. You should ask them to explain how it happens that our sacred Books ascribe the Creation of the World immediately to the Supreme Being, and teach men that they are under his immediate government, to the total exclusion of all inferior deities—how it happened that Moses never plainly inculcated a future state of rewards and punishments, and preferred leading the people to expect an exact distribution, as the sanction of his Law, of rewards and punishments in this life,—though he must have known, if an impostor, that he *might* safely promise rewards and punishments after death without fear of being refuted by the experience of living men, and that he could not safely promise what he did without his promises being certainly proved false.* You should ask them to explain how it happens that the christian promise of eternal life, through the *resurrection of the body* at the last day, is so different from any promise of eternal life that

* Compare on the general subject Whately's *Essays on the Peculiarities of the Christian Religion*, (Parker, London, 6th edition, 1850.) Also, the *Revelations of a Future State*, and *Lectures on Angels*, and on the *Apostles*, by the same author.

was ever made by Man—how it happens that the Bible contains no minute and fanciful revelations of the state of the departed, and proposes no means of intercourse between us and them, nor any way by which we can influence their condition—how it happens that the New Testament contains no Creeds, no Catechisms, no Ritual of Divine Worship, and prescribes no Sacrifices, and no Order of Sacerdotal Priests—and how it happens that a set of ignorant Jewish peasants should have discovered and taught a purer morality than the wisest of the heathen sages had ever discovered.

These and many other such peculiarities, which no other religion but Christianity and those which have *directly borrowed* from Christianity possesses, you may reasonably ask an Infidel to account for on his principles : and if he fail to do so, you may point out to him that it is *he* who is *credulous* and not *you* : since he believes much stranger and more unaccountable things than Christians can at all credit. *We*, indeed, believe that, in the setting up of Christianity, some things happened different from what daily experience of the course of nature might lead us to expect. But then we assign a sufficient *cause* for these wonderful events—namely, the almighty power of God ; and a sufficient *reason* for the exertion of that power—namely, to attest a divine Revelation. *They*, on the contrary, suppose that all the best-established laws of the human mind were violated, and that men, in this one case, acted differently from the way in which they act in every other,—while yet they are unable to assign any probable cause, or any specious reason for such an astounding miracle.

The truth is that, in the case of Christianity, we cannot escape miracles, whichever way we turn ; and the only question is, whether we will admit miracles wrought by a sufficient cause, and for a sufficient reason, or miracles wrought *by* nothing at all, and *for* nothing at all. Whosoever, for example, rejects as incredible the notion of there having been direct communication between God and Man at any time, because we have no sensible proof of any such communication taking place now, must believe that Man at first civilized himself. Now everything that we know of the laws of the human mind leads us to judge that such a thing as this is impossible ; and all experience tends to prove that such a thing has never happened ; nor can a single instance be alleged—

without manifestly begging the question—of any nation that ever of itself made the first steps from a savage to a civilized state.

Again, whoever rejects as incredible the notion that Christianity first made its way by the evidence of miracles, must believe that Christ and his Apostles did, without any superhuman powers, what we have the best reason for thinking no man, without such powers could do, and what certainly without such powers, no other men in like circumstances have ever done. Ask any one whom you meet, Christian, Deist, or Atheist, *who* was the most remarkable person that ever lived, and *who* effected the greatest revolution that ever was effected in the religion of mankind?—and, if not totally ignorant of history, he must at once answer, Jesus of Nazareth. And the next inquiry is, How came He to be such? and how did a Jewish peasant overthrow the religion of the world, and establish his faith over the civilized nations, when no one else ever succeeded in such an attempt?

The miraculous occurrences recorded in the Bible are indeed extraordinary, and wonderful, and, in themselves, improbable; but all of them put together are as nothing in point of strangeness compared with the only alternative,—with what must be believed by any one who should thereupon resolve to *reject* those miraculous narratives. That a handful of Jewish peasants and fishermen should undertake to abolish the religions of the whole civilized world, and introduce a new one, in defiance of all the prejudices, and all the power of this world arrayed against them;—that they should think to effect this by pretending to miraculous powers which they did not, and knew they did not possess;—and that they should *succeed* in the attempt,—all this is surely many times more incredible than anything and everything recorded in our Scriptures. And no one should make a boast of his "*incredulity*" in disbelieving something that is very strange, while he is believing—as the only alternative—something incomparably *more* strange.

But many persons are apt to forget—though it is self-evident on a moment's reflection—that *disbelieving* is believing; since to disbelieve any assertion is to believe its contradictory; and whoever does this on slight grounds, is both credulous and incredulous; these being, in fact, one and the same habit of mind.

Thus, the Jews who rejected Jesus as a Magician (as the un-

believing Jews do, at this day), accounting for his miracles as performed through the aid of evil spirits, and who are accordingly reproached with "want of faith," evidently showed the grossest credulity in adopting such an explanation. For, the only way to avoid credulity and incredulity—the two necessarily going together,—is, to listen to, and yield to, the best evidence, and to believe and disbelieve on good grounds.

Since then, as we have said, Miracles cannot be escaped on any supposition, it might seem superfluous to consider the arguments by which Infidels seek to prove that Miracles are impossible. You will, however, find almost all of them answered very clearly* in the work to which we have often referred you—the *Lessons on Christian Evidences*. Nor have we ever seen any attempt to reply to the answers there given, though the objections are repeated continually.

Indeed, some later objectors to Miracles have obviated the necessity of an answer on our part by affording one themselves. One gentleman, for example (an able writer on other subjects) has argued that such miracles as are ascribed to Jesus could not have been wrought by Him; since, if they had been, the Jews could not have avoided believing in Him. Yet, almost in the same breath, he declares that he himself would not have believed in Jesus, even if he had been an eye-witness of those miracles!† But, apart from this inconsistency, we might point out to him that he has before his eyes strong evidence of the force of Jewish prejudice. He sees Jews clinging to a religion which he believes to be false, and to be proved false in a most striking manner—clinging to it for ages together in spite of the clearest rational evidence, and even the sensible proof afforded by the destruction of their Temple, and their own dispersion over the earth. In reality, we have no difficulty in accounting for the *rejection* of

* An eminent dignitary of the Church of Rome has, (in opposition to another of equal rank in the same church), lately pronounced this work not only mischievous and heretical, but miserably *obscure*. It is believed, however, that his decisions, either as a critic or as a philosopher, are not generally acquiesced in by the learned world.

† Greg's *Creed of Christendom*, pp. 204—207. His reason is, because, though we cannot account for such facts *now* by natural causes, science *may* discover a natural account for them hereafter. It would be shorter to say at once, that we cannot believe any fact of ancient history, because something may be discovered hereafter to refute the truth of it—or that we cannot believe any man to be honest, because he may turn out a rogue—or, indeed, trust any moral evidence, because all moral evidence leaves a *possibility* of the fact being otherwise. But see *Lessons on Evidence*, Lesson v., s. 2, p. 82, 10th edition.

Christianity by the majority of the Jews. It is *he* who should account for its *reception* by so many of them. The rejection of Christianity by the Jews no more shows that Christianity had not good proof to offer, than the rejection by the same people of pure deism or atheism, or whatever else they dislike, proves that nothing inconsistent with their prejudices can be supported by clear and cogent reasons. The reception of Christianity by them supposes prejudice overcome by *something*; and the question is, by what? The rejection of it implies nothing but the steady action of a principle known by plain fact to exist, and known by plain fact also to be capable of resisting the strongest evidence.

Unbelievers, however, are generally very impatient of being asked to *account* for anything on their part; and not unnaturally, since they seldom have any probable account to give. If you ask them, for instance, to account for the origin of such historical Books, containing narratives of Miracles, as those of the Old and New Testaments, they reply that they had the same origin as the *Mythical* history of other nations—that Mythology was the result of “some fixed Idea,” which led a people to think that some such events *must have* happened, and thence to imagine that these particular events really did happen. The “fundamental idea,* for example, it is said of the Jewish Mythology, was the earnest belief of the Jews that they were the only favourites of Jehovah, *the Creator and Lord of the whole world*; and that this made them imagine that they had been under his immediate government, and that all other persons were merely his instruments.”

Now this is only evading one difficulty by raising many. For one is immediately led to ask, how came this one semi-barbarous people to reach the idea that their God was “the Creator and Lord of the whole earth”—an idea that no other nation of antiquity ever reached? And, even supposing that they could of themselves have reached such an idea, how came it to suggest a *Mythology*? In all other nations, Mythology has always recoiled from the idea of the Supreme. So far from making “all other persons merely his instruments,” it has *withdrawn* their agency from his influence. It has excluded Him by a painted screen of grotesque shapes of Demons and Demigods, genii,

* Berger, cited by Parker, *Translation of De Wette's Introduction*, &c. Vol. ii. p. 24.

fairies, or Saints, beyond which Reason indeed sometimes looked, but Fancy never. Mythology has ever stood rebuked and silent before THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT.

It is not the first step, then, here that is all the difficulty; but neither is the second. We may allow both, and yet the third is such a stride, that the hapless Theory bursts in the exertion.

If the idea of being under the peculiar guardianship of Jehovah were the cause why the Jewish History is a history of Miracles wrought by Him, Miracle should appear most when that idea prevailed most. But it appears *least* in the later Books of Scripture, when it is plain that the idea we speak of was as strong as ever—nay, stronger than ever. And this surely is a remarkable fact. For observe how the case stands.

A Mythology (they tell us with superior airs of Wisdom) is not invented by this or that man, but by "the collective mind of the nation." Very well. But was the collective mind of the Nation, before the Captivity, really *theocratic*? On the contrary, we know that it was in a continual struggle *against* the idea of the Theocracy—that the people were continually falling away to the worship of other gods besides Jehovah, and continually *forgetting* Him who was "the Creator and Lord of the whole world." Yet we are told that this perverse and intractable people—unscientific themselves, and doomed for ever (like Nicolais' unruly goblins in Faust) to cross the most certain rules of modern science—created a Mythology founded upon an idea which they never fully or permanently mastered, until *after* the Mythology was created!

Would this pass for good sense on any other subject but Religion?

Let us look next at the account given of the Miraculous History of the New Testament. The Jews, it is said,* had certain expectations of what their Messiah was to be; and the character of Jesus strongly impressed many of them to the belief that He was the Messiah; and hence they were led afterwards to fancy that He *must* have done what the Messiah *ought* to have done.

Indeed! we answer. But then, unfortunately for this Theory, it is notorious that the Jews expected a very *different* kind of

* See Strauss, *Leben Jesu*.

Messiah from what Jesus is described to have been. They expected a conquering Prince, not a Crucified Teacher.

"No matter for that," it is rejoined: "for this only shows that the disciples of Jesus *modified* their previous notions of the Messiah so as to suit such facts of his history as could not be denied." But when the Theory takes this shape, it plainly leaves itself without a foundation. If Jesus neither wrought miracles to prove his divine Mission, nor in any way fulfilled the expectations of the Messiah, what was there to impress men's minds so strongly with the conviction that He *was* the Messiah? Take away his miracles, and you leave Him nothing but the character of an humble Teacher, followed by a few poor peasants, addressing calm lessons of morality to a people swallowed up in factious strife and ceremonial superstition—a people divided between the hot bigotry of the Pharisees and the cold incredulity of the Sadducees—but selfish and worldly to the heart's core, in both extremes, and agitated by that most absorbing of all excitements—a fierce political agitation. Read Josephus' account of that age and generation, and then say whether such a cause was likely to produce such an effect.

But again, when Jesus was first believed to be the Messiah, it must have been upon the persuasion that he would fulfil the popular expectations of the Messiah. How then came the belief in his Messiahship to remain after He had failed to fulfil them; and to remain so strongly imprinted, as to change the very foundation on which it was built? "The *necessity* of the case," it is replied, "required that his disciples should accommodate their views to known facts. When it was certain that He was put to death, they could only mend the matter by fancying that He had risen again."

Now the necessity of all this for Dr. Strauss's Theory is plain enough: but it is not easy to see its necessity for anything else. For the Apostles were not modern philosophers, prepared to sacrifice everything to a Theory, but plain unsophisticated men. Their hopes had been confessedly disappointed, and their faith had failed. Hope, Faith, and Courage, had been buried in their Master's tomb. These might rise again with Him, but they could not raise Him, when they were not themselves revived. And the question is, What revived them? It is idle to say, "an altered view of the prophecies," because that is only sug-

gesting again the same question in another form—*What* altered their view of the prophecies? These prophecies, according to the Infidels, can only be made to speak of the Messiah's *sufferings* by one who *already* believes in a suffering Messiah. If they really do predict "Christ's sufferings, and the Glory that should follow," let this be distinctly allowed, and we shall know how to use the admission. But if they do not, the question still recurs, *What* produced the strong persuasion, which made the disciples *fancy* a meaning so remote from the notions of that age, so different,—as we are told,—from the natural meaning of those prophecies?

The choice is indeed a hard one; but philosophy, when driven to the last, will boldly prefer an absurdity to a Miracle. Perhaps the Myth arose of itself,—or else it was produced by SOMETHING. "SOMETHING," says Strauss, "sensible to the ear or eye, *sometimes perhaps the aspect of SOME UNKNOWN PERSON*, gave them impressions of an appearance of Jesus." These SOMETHINGS have done good service in their day, on the orthodox side; but, if we were in the ranks of Dr. Strauss, we should be ashamed to march through Coventry with such a troop.

But this is not all. Let the cause be what it will, or let Myths be mushrooms that spring naturally in some soils without any cause at all, still it is impossible that, *in such a case*, the Myth should have arisen, or, having arisen, should have been propagated. For, if the idea of Christ's Resurrection occurred to the disciples at all, it must have occurred to them as a thing *to be proved*. "SOMETHING" may have made it congenial to their own minds; but nothing could have bewitched them to believe it would turn out congenial to the minds of priests and people reeking with the blood of a murdered Messiah. And they must, therefore, have plainly perceived that, in spreading such a story, their personal safety was at stake. We read, accordingly, of their being "straitly threatened by the Jewish rulers, as intending to bring on *them* this man's blood."

Now, was ever Myth generated under such circumstances as these? The genuine Myth not only seems self-evident to the person who conceives it, but is supposed by him self-evident to every one. If he himself questions it at its rise, or thinks of its being questioned, and *proof* demanded, there is an end of it at once. If the mind be once arrested between the premises and

the conclusion, the fanciful spell which binds them together is broken, and it becomes as impossible to combine them again in the same way, as it is to dream when we are awake. Whatever is framed under such circumstances may be a conjecture, a theory, or an invention, but it cannot be a Myth.

Still less is it possible that a Myth should have been *propagated* under such circumstances. The character of Jesus may have produced as strong an impression as you please on his few immediate followers: but to talk of an impression made on a vast multitude who never could have known him familiarly, by a man of low birth and mean fortune—who never performed any dazzling exploit, who was crucified, dead, and buried, and whose body, if He did not rise, must have been forthcoming—an impression so strong as to alter all their strongest national prejudices,—to revolutionize the Faith of their childhood, and persuade them, on no evidence at all, that He had risen bodily, and bodily ascended into Heaven,—this is to talk such nonsense as infidelity alone can venture on, when engaged in the desperate task of evading a Miracle. In the most Mythic age that ever was this would have been impossible. Myths have been founded on many a religion, but no religion yet was ever founded on a Myth. It is in the soil of minds unshaken in their belief, and warmed by the sympathy of those around them, that such plants as these can spring and flourish. But the first Christians were very unlike enthusiasts, and still less were the men with whom they had to deal such as could be won by mere enthusiasm. And if we will only allow the Christians to speak for themselves, the Gospel and Acts of Luke alone will show us that they had very sound notions of the sort of proof which can establish facts, and of the necessity of such proof. Twelve men were the prime WITNESSES of the Resurrection; their *qualifications*, that they had known Jesus during his whole public life, and had eaten and drunk, and familiarly conversed with Him for forty days after his rising again. Christianity, from the first, at least pretended, and believed itself, to stand upon the evidence of testimony, not on preconceived fancies.

With these pretensions then, it arose in an enlightened and sceptical age, but amongst a despised and narrow-minded people. It earned hatred and persecution at home by its liberal genius and opposition to the national prejudices. It earned contempt

abroad by its connexion with the country where it was born, but which sought to strangle it in its birth. Emerging from Judæa, it made its way outward through the most polished regions of the world—Asia Minor, Egypt, Greece, Rome: and in all it attracted notice and provoked hostility. Successive massacres, and attempts at extermination, prosecuted for ages by the whole force of the Roman empire, it bore without resistance, and seemed to draw fresh vigour from the axe; but assaults, in the way of argument, from whatever quarter, it was never ashamed or unable to repel; and, whether attacked or not, it was resolutely aggressive. In four centuries it had pervaded the civilized world, it had mounted the throne of the Cæsars, it had spread beyond the limits of their sway, and had made inroads upon barbarian nations whom their eagles had never visited. It had gathered all genius and all learning into itself, and made the literature of the world its own. It survived the inundation of the barbarian tribes, and conquered the world once more, by converting its conquerors to the faith. It survived an age of barbarism. It survived the restoration of letters. It survived an age of free inquiry and scepticism, and has long stood its ground in the field of argument, and commanded the intelligent assent of the greatest minds that ever were. It has been the parent of civilization, and the nurse of learning; and if light and humanity and freedom be the boast of modern Europe, it is to Christianity that she owes them. Exhibiting in the life of Jesus a picture, varied and minute, of the perfect human united with the divine, in which the mind of man has not been able to find a deficiency or detect a blemish—a picture copied from no model and rivalled by no copy—it has satisfied the moral wants of mankind;—it has accommodated itself to every period and every clime;—and it has retained, through every change, a salient spring of life which enables it to throw off corruption and repair decay, and renew its youth, amidst outward hostility and inward divisions. Yet this religion, and all its moral miracles,—this mighty impulse which no time or space can check or exhaust—proceeds, if we believe Strauss and his admirers, from a Myth casually produced in the fancies of some Galilean peasants. The moral world of modern civilization has sprung from the fortuitous concourse of some atoms of Mythology in the brains of unknown SOMEBODIES!

Credulous as Christians may be thought, they are too sceptical to believe this. And no doubt, in a short time, the very admirers of such a theory will cease to believe it, and turn to some new Fiction, just as absurd but more fresh, and therefore better suited to the changing fashion of unbelief. "But ye, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ."

And remember that the walls of our Jerusalem are to be "built in troublous times," when we cannot safely lay aside either sword or helmet while engaged in the dangerous work. Those, indeed, of our own number who would cry "peace" when there is "no peace," are really some of our most dangerous enemies.

A late writer, for example,* who professes a great regard for Christianity, would have all young persons kept in ignorance that any one ever doubted Christianity! and thinks that, if we neglect this sage advice, we shall run a serious risk of making our children infidels by laying before them the evidences of their religion. He forgets that a child cannot read the New Testament without learning that "some believed the words that were spoken, *and some believed not.*" And that no one can, in these days, be so completely debarred from all knowledge of history as not to hear of the French at the Revolution abjuring Christianity, and of multitudes of their Priests professing unbelief.

And—as to saying that inquiry must lead to unbelief—it is strange that such writers should not perceive that an admission of this kind, coming from a professed friend to Christianity, tends more to shake men's faith in it than all the attacks of all the avowed infidels in the world put together. For, what would such a writer say of some professed friend coming forward, as his advocate, and saying "my friend here is a veracious and worthy man, and there is no foundation for any of the charges brought against him; and his integrity is fully believed in by persons who thoroughly trust him, and who have never thought of reasoning or inquiring about his character at all: but, of all things, *do not make any investigation* into his character: for, the more you inquire and examine, the less likely most people will be to believe in his integrity!"

* *Fraser's Magazine*, No. 274, p. 442.

You will remember that we have already noticed in these Cautions the injury done to Christianity by these its professed friends; and you will remember also that we pointed out other classes also of professed friends by whom similar injury is inflicted on the cause they claim as their own.

Those, for instance, who avow the doctrine of *Reserve*, create disbelief by leaving men uncertain whether their real inward opinions are the same as they ostensibly maintain. Those, again, who are for penal laws and coercion in religious matters, produce the same effect by appearing to distrust the force of argument; and (even still more) by representing Christ as insincere when He declared his kingdom not to be so of this world as that his Disciples should fight for Him, and in bidding men to "render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and unto God the things that are God's."

And lastly, those who represent Christianity as an *immoral* Antinomian system. These persons directly propagate infidelity; because every one sees at once that such a system cannot be from God.

Now, as it has been often remarked that an epidemic disease often indirectly saves more lives, by rousing men to attend to cleanliness, sobriety, and good ventilation, than it destroys directly—so, if we use it aright, the present prevalence of Infidelity may do more good than harm. It may put us upon purifying our religious atmosphere—clearing away the old corrupted buildings where the seeds of disease lingered—and guarding our children more carefully than we were guarded against dangers, the magnitude of which we have learned by woful experience.

INDEX.

The Roman numerals refer to the " Caution," the Arabic to the page.

- Absolution, or remission of sins, a prayer for God's forgiveness, ix. 174.
 Abstinence, x. 197.
 Abuses of extemporaneous prayer, xxiv. 431.
 Acceptation, every, not scriptural, xxvi. 453.
 Actions, external, xxvi. 460.
 Acts, outward, v. 74.
 Adam, penitent for the sin of, xxvii. 474; could not have transgressed if he had not been frail, xxvii. 474.
 Advantages of church-teaching in communicating preliminary information, xxii. 395.
 Aggression, papal, cause of the Cautions, ix. 159.
 Alarmists, xxi. 375.
 Aldermen, xvi. 317.
 Alexander, Pope, VI., a monster of iniquity, vii. 122; inscription on his tomb, vii. 130.
 Alfred, king, first translator of the Gospel, xxiii. 410
 Altar, iii. 39; why taken away, vii. 126.
 Analogical language an additional snare, xiv. 278.
 Analogy, not to be pressed too far, xiv. 278.
 Ancient fathers, xxvi. 454.
 Andrews, bishop, xvii. 329.
 Antinomianism, doctrine, xxvi. 459; not generally popular, xxvi. 460.
 Antiquity of the Church only sure foundation of belief, xi. 198; of prescribed forms in the primitive Church, xxiv. 432.
 Apostles' Creed, ii. 13; exercised church government, but appointed no successors, ii. 17; not to have successors, iii. 32; could not have omitted this if they possessed it, iii. 40; declare to men condition of pardon, iii. 43; taught the whole Gospel to all men, v. 87; disown sacrificing priests, v. 91; to regenerate man's nature, v. 91; how they regarded the Christian ministry, v. 94; come forward as witnesses, xi. 203; concealed no doctrine from inquiry, xiv. 284; false, exposed by Paul, doubtless brought many charges against him, xix. 347; creed, no mention of the atonement, xv. 436; Socinians use this creed, xxv. 436; expected a man should be the better for his faith, xxvi. 461.
 Apostolical succession, what, ix. 163; not a principle of our Church, ix. 171; see notes, xv. 301; of a Christian ministry, xvi. 306; descent in an unbroken line of the individual minister, xvi. 306; miraculous interference to preserve, &c., xvi. 310; constitutions, xxv. 439; symbols like ancient sea walls, xxv. 442.
 Apostolicals, vii. 123.
 Archbishop of Westminster, ix. 159.
 Archon, xxviii. 484.
 Arians, or Socinians, in possession of meeting-houses built by sincere believers in the divinity of Christ, xxiv. 432; of the last century subscribed to formularies of our Church, xxvi. 453.

- Aristocracy, high, naturally disposed to favour Tractism, xviii. 340; xxviii. 482.
- Articles and Liturgy of our Church propound matters of faith on authority of Scripture, ix. 166; Thirty-nine, do not condemn Transubstantiation, xiii. 231; non-natural interpretation of, xvii. 329; Holy Scripture in Article vi. does not mean version of, xxii. 392; and formularies of our Church are crippled by unfair expounders of them, xxvi. 451; of the Established Church, ambitious of a Protestant sense, are patient of a Catholic one, xxvi. 454; and Liturgy left many points undefined, xxvi. 455.
- Artifice, dishonest, to convict any one of, xiii. 226.
- Association to be formed for a good object when needful, viii. 154.
- Athanasian doctrine, xxvi. 454.
- Authority, confusion between two meanings of the word, viii. 151.
- Baal, ii. 14.
- Babel, xvii. 324.
- Bacon, Lord, xii. 219; opposed sophistical philosophy, but empirical also, xx. 363; an instance of genius profound and clear, xxix. 490.
- Baronius, Cardinal, ii. 14.
- Bath, a bridge at, in a crazy condition, xiii. 332.
- Bereans, ignorant, not satisfied to be taught of Paul, vii. 126.
- Bernard, St., aspiration for reform of the Church, vii. 122.
- Bible and Crown disappeared, xi. 197; English, a translation, xiv. 282; is not our sole rule of faith, xxi. 379; perusal of by the people, cannot be useful, may be mischievous, xxi. 380.
- Bishops tempted to encourage, at least not to resist, the early spread of Tractism, xviii. 340.
- Bishops, Popish, Irish Church, (see note ii. 24), governors of the Church, ix. 163; in primitive ages chief minister of a particular church, xvi. 317.
- Breaker up of the club, *'Eraipias διαλυτης*, xxviii. 487.
- Brethren of the free spirit, vii. 123.
- Bridget, St., revelations of, &c., vii. 124.
- British Critic, xiii. 236.
- Brotherhoods and sisterhoods of mercy, xviii. 344.
- Buonaparte, profession of a desire of peace, viii. 155.
- Butler, Bishop, xxviii. 481.
- Calvin, principles silently evaporated, xxiv. 432.
- Catholic, title of, ii. 13; meaning of, ii. 13; translation of the Scriptures, what, iv. 55; Roman, have not determined where infallibility exists, vi. 114; Roman, appeal to the extent of their communion, viii. 146; Roman, seldom believes his creed only partially erroneous, xvii. 325; Roman, increasing number in England, ii. 14.
- Casuists, vi. 108.
- Cautions, timely, i. 3; object of, xx. 364.
- Ceremonies, useful in their places, v. 76; religious, liable to degenerate into mere form, v. 76.
- Chart, sea, xii. 218.
- Chemist's shop, xvi. 307.
- Christ, vicegerent, i. 2; and his Apostles, i. 6; appointed two sacraments only, v. 72; formed his disciples on earth into a society to which he promised his constant presence, xxi. 278; injunction not to give that that is holy to dogs, xiv. 289.
- Christian truth only gradually discovered, v. 85; teachers, what bound to teach, v. 94; ministry, regarded by the Apostles as helpers of others, v. 94; not exempted from studying when the Church had living infallible guides, vi. 112; early, zealous to multiply copies of the Scriptures, xxi. 386; humility, mistakes about, xxvii. 465; not in mere general confessions of weakness, &c., xxvii. 466.
- Christianity, not devised by man, shown from its omissions, iii. 41; taught an atonement had been made, v. 79; rests its claims on evidence, xi. 203; open to many and perplexing objections, xi. 209; usefulness, xii. 213; placed on the same footing with pagan superstition, &c., xv. 292; a fable of it teaches obedience to the universal church, but omits to show to whom that obedience is due, xvii. 322; we cannot escape miracles, xxix. 506; suspicious of the hollowness of the whole system, xii. 215.

- Church, Catholic, authoritative expounders of the will of God, ix. 163; the whole in a state of schism, ix. 164; universal judgment of, in the matter of the three creeds, not decisive, but Scripture, ix. 167; principles, x. 178; of Rome, tractarian account of, xiii. 231; in every Christian minister, from Apostles' times downwards, xvi. 306; composed of many bishoprics, xvi. 318; government, no unalterable model of, xvi. 318; universal, one visible society on earth, xvii. 321; head of invisible, in heaven, xvii. 321; universal, the authorized guide, xvii. 324; ordinances and formularies no other than encroachments on Scripture, xxi. 381; in the institution of a provision for the instruction of those unable or unlikely to instruct themselves, xxi. 388; teaching, benefit of, xxii. 390; office of, to teach, xxii. 390; ordinances of, not less truly gift of God than that of his Holy Spirit, xxii. 394; doctrines, proof of, whence to be derived, xxii. 401; members of, pledged to nothing but its public recognised formularies, xxiii. 414; see note, 409; a body of Christians united by a common belief and joining in a common worship, xxiv. 425; must necessarily lay down rules for its own preservation, xxiv. 426; not justified in making regulations arbitrarily, xxiv. 427; government, xxv. 438; Christian, no, fails to apply some test besides the words of Scripture, xxvi. 452; of England, shrank into comparative insignificance, xxvi. 455; Romish, claims more than to be free from all tincture of error, xxvii. 478.
- Church, Romish, i. 3; of Rome, purification of its corruptions, why regarded as innovations, ii. 15; unity of, ii. 15; Greek, ii. 16; unity of, in what sense unscriptural, ii. 16; universal, not one society, ii. 16; universal, *one* in reference to its head in heaven, ii. 17; hear the explanation of, ii. 19; Roman-catholic, does change, ii. 22; free from divisions, ii. 23; Romish, errors not confined to Church of Rome, in the Greek, v. 68; Greek equally resolute against papal aggressions, v. 68; unity within, when no proof of truth, v. 82; unity of, what it is, v. 86; Rome, power of the clergy in it, whence, v. 100; Greek, claims to be infallible, vi. 107; Romish, an experiment tried and failed, vii. 124; of Rome, not necessarily the infallible one, vii. 143; Catholic, what it is, ix. 163.
- Clement of Alexandria cited by Mr. Newman, xiii. 227.
- Clergy, predisposed to tractarianism, why, xviii. 336; instance of tractite greediness of power, xviii. 336; dignity of, advanced by theory of Apostolical succession, xviii. 339.
- Commentator, difference between, and translator, xx. 415.
- Communion in both kinds the safer course, viii. 158.
- Confession, when proper, iii. 49.
- Confessors differ, iii. 46; xvii. 324.
- Conscience, not reason, is judge of truth in religious matters, xviii. 333.
- Conspiracy, see note, xiii. 234.
- Conversions to Rome, movement ending in, whence, v. 100.
- Council, Trent, due honour to images, vi. 115; Vienne, vii. 122; supreme, for determining faith and practice, ix. 164; how can a Christian distinguish between true and false? xxi. 380.
- Creed and confessions of faith, xxiv. 334; sometimes omits mention of important article of faith, xxv. 336; claim acceptance only as being agreeable to Scripture, xxii. 404.
- Danger, real, not prevented by stringent measures, iv. 66; mocking saints, v. 72.
- Deacons, what? in primitive times, xvi. 318; an instance of carelessness about scripture authority, xxi. 385.
- Deceivers, cunning, xiii. 224.
- Decrees, divine (vide note, *Idola Theatri*), xiv. 277.
- Deism, few who abandon Roman church rest short of, xvii. 325.
- Disbelieve a thing is to believe its opposite, xi. 200; xxix. 507.
- Dissenters doing what they can to aid Tractarians, x. 195; venting their rage against their best protector, x. 196.
- Double doctrine, xii. 223; a dangerous weapon, xiii. 224, 226, 238; mistaken for gradual teaching, xx. 370.
- Ecclesiastical establishment, i. 7; matters in, law determines some things that must be settled, xxiv. 425.

- Edinburgh Review*, iv. 52.
 Ephesus, mob at, i. 3.
 Episcopal ordination, or consecration, necessary in the Anglican communion, why? ix. 171.
 Error, pure, unmixed, does not readily find a place in the mind of man, xx. 367; from overlooking the province of a church, xxi. 378.
 Eucharist, not a sacrifice, iii. 39.
 Evangelical alliance, xxviii. 492.
 Evidence, all attempts to investigate, hazardous, xi. 198; no provision for subsequent propagation of the Gospel, except by, xi. 203; Gospel upon, rational, was preached to the poor, xi. 207.
 Faction, xxviii. 480.
 Factors of Rome, xix. 350.
 Faith, Christian, what it is, iii. 27; rule of, xxvii. 477.
 Fanatical persons have denied the necessity of instruction to Christians, xiv. 281.
 Fancy, idols of, xxix. 503.
 Fasting, Jewish, Leviticus, x. 190.
 Fathers, writings of, not accessible, xv. 296; mere human teachers, xv. 298.
 Fog bank at sea, xxix. 498.
 Formalism, the superstition of priestcraft prevailed for many ages through Christendom, xix. 355.
 Formularies, our, capable of improvement, x. 179; of our church, xxv. 435.
 Free country only gives security, viii. 150; masons, different stages of initiation, xii. 223.
 French at the Revolution abjure Christianity, xxix. 515.
 Geology, imperfectly understood, grafted on the sacred text, xxix. 502.
 Gnostics, xx. 362; xxvii. 477.
 God, a jealous, iii. 32.
 Gospel, one for the poor, another for the learned, xiv. 275.
 Hearses and coffins do not cause death, ii. 12.
 Heathen priests, sole duty offering sacrifices, xxiv. 434.
 Holland, gigantic dykes, xxiii. 406.
 Holy water, v. 74.
 Hume, see note, *British Critic*, *Edinburgh Review*, xi. 212.
 Hypothetical harmony, xx. 372.
 Infallibility, a craving of the people, v. 102; real meaning of, vi. 106; interpretation must be accessible, vi. 114.
 Infidelity and atheism, vi. 115; chief causes of our evils, xxviii. 495.
 Infidels glad to confound Gospel faith with credulity, xi. 202, see note; his strength lies in our weakness, xxviii. 495.
 Intercessory prayer proper part of public devotions of the church, xxiv. 431.
 Invocation of departed saints, Virgin Mary, iii. 32.
 Irishmen, Association of United, xxviii. 489.
 James, Apostle, directs not to absolve, but pray over, iii. 43.
 Januarius, St., melting the blood of, xiii. 233; xv. 293.
 Jesuitical morality, xiii. 237.
 Judgment, private, necessity of, ii. 18; xv. 300, see note; must fall back on our own, xviii. 333; like a pair of scales, xviii. 336.
 Laity, xv. 296; no provision made for preservation of truth among, xvi. 309.
 Legislative interference, i. 10.
 Liars have retrieved their characters by confessing their former lies, xiii. 225.
 Liturgies of Rome and Paris largely imported into England, xvii. 329; censures of, xvii. 329.
 Liturgy, a scriptural and sober, in the Established Church, xix. 358; more likely to be judiciously framed than extemporary prayers, xxiv. 430.
 Logic, rules of, how discovered, iii. 28.
 London fog, effects of, xxix. 496.
 Lutheran doctrine of Justification, xxvi. 426.
 Mary, Virgin, silence respecting, in Acts and Epistles, iii. 33.
 Mass in Latin, viii. 158.
 Maxim, current, when bad men combine, good men must unite, xxviii. 490.
 Middle way, ix. 163; xvii. 324; xviii. 344.
 Miraculous deliverance, xxiv. 420.
 Missal, Romish, xv. 298.
 Mistakes, necessary evils, vi. 115.

- Mixture of evil not necessary for a really good purpose, viii. 155.
 Monasteries, viii. 152, 153.
 Moriarty, Rev. Mr., a Protestant clergyman at Dingle, iv. 52.
 Mormon, Book of, xi. 210.
 Mortal sin, xvii. 325.
 Motives for disparaging appeals to evidence, &c., xv. 304.
 Mysteries, speculative, v. 92; xiii. 227; xiv. 275; none of man's making, xiv. 276.
 Myth, xxix. 512.
 Mythology the result of some fixed idea, xxix. 509.
 Natural theology, xii. 217.
 Nature, corrupt human, how far, v. 75.
 Nebular taste, xxix. 497.
 Newman, Mr., forced into premature disclosures, xiii. 230, 232, 236; letter to Dr. Jelf, see note, xvii. 329.
 New Testament, writers of, show no inclination to commend a credulous disposition, xi. 201; omits catechism, creeds, liturgies, xxv. 437.
 Nicene Creed, xxv. 437.
 Non-natural, xxvi. 451.
 Objections to Christianity, xii. 217, 218, 220.
 Obsolete laws, x. 182.
 Oliver Cromwell, xxvii. 468.
 Order, reason of appointed teachers, xxiii. 410.
 Orders of a corrupt and corrupting clergy, xvi. 308.
 Ordinance, x. 187.
 Ordination, xxiii. 411; Nag's Head, xiii. 263; office in our Prayer-books, xiv. 282.
 Orthodox authorities, xv. 296; fathers, xxvii. 477.
 Oscillations to be looked for, xix. 355.
 Oxford, heads of Houses at, xiii. 231.
 Palmer, Mr., remonstrates without effect, xiii. 234, 235; xvii. 328.
 Pantheism, xiii. 237; or Atheism, xviii. 335.
 Papal aggressions, i. 4.
 Parables of our Lord, why concealed, xiv. 286.
 Pastoral, pope's, xiii. 249, 251, 252, 253, &c.; xviii. 344; office made easy to conscience, xviii. 337.
 Penance, sacrament of, unscriptural and dangerous, iii. 41; v. 79; xvii. 324.
 Persecution, not to be opposed on grounds of mere expediency, iv. 63; vi. 109; in China and Japan, iv. 57.
 Peter, supremacy of, not to be proved from Scripture, xvii. 323.
 Philosophers, xii. 213.
 Pictures and images not necessary, viii. 157.
 Pious frauds, v. 100.
 Pope, cannot make you Roman-catholics, i. 9, ii. 12; authority, extent of, not defined, ii. 24; iv. 57; ix. 161.
 Popery, papist, words of reproach, ii. 14.
 Prayers by the apostles not recorded, xxv. 438.
 Prerogative, royal, i. 3.
 Presbyter, xxiv. 424.
 Presbyterianism undisguised, xvii. 329.
 Priesthood, people left without one, xvi. 308.
 Priests, two meanings of the word, iii. 38.
 Protestants, differences between, the strength of Roman-catholics, iv. 60; unlearned, only authority to fall back on, viii. 149.
 Proxy, serving God by, v. 98.
 Ptolemaic system of the universe, xiv. 279.
 Pulpit, St. Mary's, Oxford, xxvi. 457.
 Purgatory, what? v. 80.
 Queen, insult to, ix. 160; Elizabeth's Latin Prayer-book, x. 186; act of, x. 188.
 Reaction, tendency to, must be guarded against, xix. 353; history of, xix. 354; why all this stir made about, xx. 360.
 Reactions, one effect of, xxvi. 454.
 Rebecca and her daughters in Wales, i. 8.
 Reformation, subsequent to changes in the Roman-catholic religion, iii. 34.
 Religion, parliamentary, i. 8; of pagans, what? xi. 206; social, xxii. 393.
 Religious truths, concealment of, not gradual inculcation of, xiv. 285.
 Remedies cannot act on a corpse, xx. 369.
 Remission of grievous sins after baptism only by absolution of a priest, ix. 165.
 Reserve, xi. 210; doctrines, reasonable room for suspecting, xii. 222; its nature and effects, 220, 224; principle of, in religious teaching liable to abuse, xiv. 275; doctrine of atonement, xxiv. 433.
 Resolution of the will, xii. 215.
 Restoration mistaken for innovation, ii. 15.

- Revelation of a mystery, the Gospel so called, v. 94.
- Rival versions of Scripture, proof of genuineness to the unlearned, xxii. 392.
- Roman-catholics not always guided by decisions of a council, vi. 109.
- Romish corruptions, no one can point out where they began, v. 68; doctrines, danger from, not guarded against by laws and penalties, ix. 162.
- Rubric to establish order, x. 182; xxv. 438.
- Sabbath, transference from Saturday to Sunday, xxi. 385.
- Safeguards against erroneous teaching, xxiv. 424.
- Safety of the Church of Rome, viii. 156.
- Saints' days, or holy days, x. 185.
- Schism, the remedy to be last resorted to, xix. 358.
- Science, mathematical, illustrates double meaning of "authority," xxii. 397.
- Scriptures must be put into the hands of Christ's disciples, v. 96; xiv. 281, 282; xv. 295; to discover true meaning of, a work of responsibility and labour; xviii. 337; proof by, alone admissible in an Article of Faith, xxii. 403; delineation of Christian principles, xxv. 443; to furnish proofs, xxv. 444.
- Service of God the profession of the clergy, v. 99.
- Sins, men may forgive some, iii. 43; mortal, venial, not shown what they are, iii. 46.
- Style, change of, a seeming innovation, ii. 15.
- Sun-dial, supplying the place of the sun by a lamp, v. 93.
- Superstition, what it is, and its dangers, v. 81.
- System of poisoning, see Mr. Froude's *Remains*, note, xviii. 342.
- Temple of God, the true, ii. 16.
- Tractarians, who remain in the Church of England, most dangerous, ix. 165; character of the Church of Rome by, xiii. 231, 237.
- Tractism, danger of, xv. 294; premises laid down in first two volumes of the *Tracts*, xviii. 344; xx. 363.
- Tractite, progress of, party towards Romanism, ix. 163; opinions not agreeable to Scripture, x. 177; adherence to the church a pretended one, x. 178; xi. 197; xii. 214; xiv. 285, 288; xv. 292, 301; xvi. 310, 315; xvii. 320; xviii. 338; practice of reserve, xxvi. 455.
- Tracts, Roman-catholic, iv. 50; conduct of writers of, iv. 62; on purgatory, vii. 133, 137, 138, 139; viii. 145; ix. 162.
- Tracts for the Times, xii. 220; Notes and Index to ditto, xiii. 121; writer's principles of reserve, xiii. 230; Tract XC., xiii. 230, 231, 233, 234, 235, 245; movement, xvii. 320; tendency of principles, xvii. 330; Oxford, xv. 298; xviii. 343, 344; xix. 355; xxvi. 456.
- Traditions, ii. 23; Romish, uncertainty of, ii. 20; test of, ii. 21; of Jewish church, ii. 20; not the interpreter of Scripture, ii. 22; Roman-catholic, contradict Scripture, ii. 22; vi. 106; xi. 210; apostolic, xvi. 317; xxii. 402.
- Translations, various, in the condition of witnesses, viii. 150; ix. 165.
- Transubstantiation contrary to Scripture, iii. 35; xx. 363.
- Trent, Council of, xiii. 246.
- Truth, viii. 155.
- Understanding, slave of the will, xviii. 336.
- Union, act of, iv. 65.
- Unity, Christian, in what it consists, ii. 17; a favourite topic with Roman-catholic controvertists, viii. 155; . . . too dearly purchased by giving up private judgment, xvii. 323.
- Vice-chancellor of Oxford, and a committee of six doctors of divinity, xvii. 328.
- Vicegerent, Christ's, i. 2.
- Voluntary tortures atoning for sin, v. 77; system, evils of, xix. 357.
- White's, Gilbert, *Natural History of Selbourne*, see, xix. 349.
- Writers, Roman-catholic, produce great effects by partial views, viii. 152; of the first six centuries, ix. 164.
- Writings of our old divines very valuable, ix. 166.

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